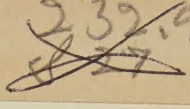
Jesus Christ before His ministry,
232.9 S27j
122737
Stapfer, Edmond Louis,
Life Pacific College Alumni Library

232.9
S27j



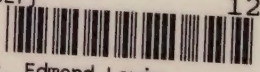
DATE DUE

NOV - 2 1992			
OCT 2 4 1998			

232.9
S27j

Stapfer, Edmond Louis, 1844-1908
Jesus Christ before His ministry

Jesus Christ before His ministry,
232.9 S27j 122737



Stapfer, Edmond Louis,
LIFE Alumni Library

DEMCO

Bonebrake Seminary

JESUS CHRIST

BEFORE HIS MINISTRY

JESUS CHRIST

BEFORE HIS MINISTRY

BY

EDMOND STAPFER

PROFESSOR IN THE FACULTY OF PROTESTANT THEOLOGY AT PARIS

Translated by

LOUISE SEYMOUR HOUGHTON

13,085

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1907

LIBRARY OF
United Theological Seminary
232.92
S793 13,085

Copyright, 1896,
By Charles Scribner's Sons.

527
27 j

L.I.F.E. College Library
1100 Glendale Blvd.
Los Angeles, Calif. 90026

PREFACE

"JESUS CHRIST: his Person, his Authority, his Ministry," — such is the title of a work which I purpose to write. In the first volume, which I now publish, I shall endeavor to relate the life of Jesus before his ministry.

Of the time which passed over him until his thirtieth year we know only so much as the evangelists Matthew and Luke have preserved for us. But it is not from the facts which they bring to light that I shall draw the pages which follow. To their touching narratives of the childhood of Jesus it seems to me that there is nothing to add, and from them nothing to subtract; and the deep poetry which breathes in these marvellous stories defies all criticism.

037131

To touch them is to spoil them. More than that, my aim is not to repeat the little that we know about the youth of Jesus; it is to seek for that which has not been told us.

The early Christians, surprised at the sobriety of the gospel narratives, tried to make up for the silence of history, and composed the apocryphal Gospels of the Infancy. I am attempting a study of this sort, but I have no intention of writing a work of pure imagination, like that of the authors of the antique legends. I would fain say what must have been the life of Jesus until his thirtieth year, by deducing from known facts some facts unknown, and permitting myself only to observe and to relate.

CONTENTS

		Page
Preface		v
Introduction		ix
Chapter		
I.	The Childhood of Jesus	3
II.	Early Beliefs	19
III.	Jesus at Twelve Years of Age	39
IV.	First Impressions and Experiences	57
V.	Studies and Reading	75
VI.	Jesus and the Pharisees	93
VII.	Jesus and the Essenes	109
VIII.	Jesus and John the Baptist	121
IX.	The Messianic Ideal of Jesus at Thirty Years of Age	137
X.	The Originality of Jesus	161
Conclusion		175

INTRODUCTION

HOW could Jesus have believed himself and proclaimed himself the Messiah?

In the first half of the nineteenth century, when historical criticism, with its severe and certain methods, addressed itself to the Gospels for the first time, the question was answered: Jesus never believed himself to be the Messiah. He owed his career only to the enthusiasm of excited disciples, who, after the death of their Master, attributed to him in good faith acts which he had not done and words which he had not spoken.

But this solution of the question quickly became antiquated. Criticism kept on in its work, and forty years of patient and

conscientious labors have compelled the impartial historian to refuse this explanation. It has been demonstrated with the most rigorous certainty that Jesus gave the most surprising witness that he believed himself to be really the Messiah expected by his people, and that he announced himself as such.

Next came Renan's explanation. Jesus first preached the pure religion of the Spirit, — love to God and love to man, the reign of charity and happiness by a universal brotherhood; and then, carried away by his success, he permitted himself to be called Son of David, that is, Messiah; and, little by little, by a sort of unconscious deceit, and under the dominion of an illusion of which he was only in part the dupe, he believed in his own Messiahship. He persuaded himself that the apocalyptic hopes of his people would soon be realized in his own person, and he died the victim of this holy and religious madness.

To Renan, Jesus is to be explained in a single word, — charm. He thought that this word solved the enigma of his life. He charmed the multitudes, — his disciples, women, the sick, — and he ended by charming himself. The pious and gentle Rabbi was before all things a charmer, and everything becomes clear when we see deeply into all that this word "charm" includes. If he spoke, his words charmed. In the early months of the Galilean ministry his words were precepts full of gentleness, exquisite words that consoled, delightful parables which enchanted the multitudes. By charm his cures are to be explained, for he incontestably did perform cures. Contact with his person, the sound of his voice, his face as well, everything about him was charming, everything was of exquisite gentleness and suave kindness.

Then came the evil days. Envy and hatred pursued him as they always pursue those who succeed and are greatly loved.

Then Jesus, by a natural reaction, felt his confidence in himself increasing. Penetrated as much with the enthusiasm which he continued to breathe as with the opposition to himself which continually became more pronounced, he had the simplicity to believe himself the Messiah, and, giving himself up to this idea even to martyrdom, he was crucified and died.

But the memory which he left behind remained, with its ever-growing charm, — for death always magnifies and transfigures. Such a memory, the circumstances being favorable, must inevitably beget for him disciples, give him a Church, conquer the world for him.

The starting-point of the triumphs of the invisible Christ was the hallucination of Mary Magdalen, one of the women who had most loved him. Her devotion was such that she believed that she saw him again, and insisted that she had seen him. Now, at that period a resurrection from the dead appeared to be a highly pos-

sible thing. Mary Magdalen's exclamation, "He is risen from the dead!" soon became every one's word, and the Christian Church was founded.

This explanation — "charm" — is evidently the only one which may be accepted, and is in fact that of those of our contemporaries who are not Christians, — and they are legion, — for there is no half-way, the dilemma is inexorable; and Renan, in spite of the scientific imperfections of his book, has rendered a very great service to science. He has shown that the problem that concerns Christ is entirely a psychological problem. The question is, to know what was taking place in the soul of Jesus. He called himself the Messiah. That is proved; it is certain. How did he reach that point? Was he crazy, — yes or no? Such it seems to us is the sole alternative which henceforth forces itself between believers and unbelievers. The question appears to us absolutely clear and precise. It can only be solved by a third supposi-

tion. Renan has very clearly shown this, and herein lies the entire scientific value of his work.

To this question, Was he mad, — yes or no? we shall try to reply, and we shall endeavor to do it purely as a historian. Our plan is to observe, to ascertain the facts, and to make them known. We shall not draw from them the dogmatic consequences which they may bear. Our task is simply that of the historian.

Do we, then, hope completely to solve, by this purely historic method, the eternal question of the Christ? For everybody in general, no; for it is possible to reach only partial results, or rather only one result, — he was not mad; a wholly negative result, which leads at once to another question, What, then, was he? And this second question is unanswerable by the historian, because the documents which might solve it are wanting.

This penury of documents will always be the cause of a continual return to the

examination of Christ's character. Pure science can never exhaust it. To this question, What, then, was he? it is no longer for history to reply, for it cannot. We enter here upon a moral question. If Jesus was not led away by a monstrous illusion, he spoke truly; if he spoke truly, he was what he said he was, — the Messiah, the Saviour of men, the Son of God. In this reply, the moral character of the historian becomes involved. He is no longer on the ground of demonstrated facts and historic verifications, but upon that of religious faith and personal conviction; and a religious belief cannot be scientifically demonstrated.

The believer says: Jesus will never be explained by science, because he is the Revelation of God himself, and incomprehensibility is one of the most certain marks of his divinity. The pure historian will always say: Jesus is not explained by science, because the documents are wanting, and we have not sufficient data con-

cerning him to solve the enigma of his appearance by historic methods. But this dilemma does not embarrass the believer. It is enough for him to know that no scientific demonstration is opposed to his faith, for he asks not of science to establish his faith, to prove it, to show it to be true. Faith is not to be demonstrated; it simply affirms itself, simply shows itself under pain of ceasing to be faith and becoming what is called sight, — that is, either a sensible or an intellectual certitude. For in questions of faith there can be neither sensible nor intellectual evidence, but only moral evidence. At bottom the believer and the non-believer are divided only upon one point. To the second, moral evidence does not suffice; to the first (and we are of this number) it does suffice.

JESUS CHRIST

HIS PERSON, HIS AUTHORITY, HIS WORK

Part First

JESUS CHRIST BEFORE HIS MINISTRY

I

THE CHILDHOOD OF JESUS

CHAPTER I

THE CHILDHOOD OF JESUS

JESUS was brought up at Nazareth. In the middle of the eighth century of Rome, about 1890 years ago,[1] this was the name[2] of a small town hidden away among the hills of Galilee, and making part of the Roman province of Syria. It was twenty-five leagues north of Jerusalem, and eight or nine hours' walk from Capernaum.

Its general aspect was dull and mean. Nazareth was a cluster of cubical houses without character or elegance, built in terraces in the hollow of an amphitheatre of rocky hills. Irregularly disposed, they formed a confused medley of small white

[1] It is impossible to fix the exact date. The first ten or twelve years of Jesus' life must have lain between the years of Rome 750 and 765.

[2] According to the best manuscripts, the correct Greek transliteration of this word is Nazara; but we retain the name Nazareth, consecrated by usage.

flat-roofed dwellings, threshing-floors and wine-presses. Here were pits hollowed out of the ground; there tombs hewn out of the rock. The fig-tree, the olive, the cactus grew everywhere, and now and then, between the houses, a tiny field of wheat.

The streets were rough and uneven; and the lanes, narrow, crooked, and steep, were often crossed by streamlets from the ravines in the hills north of the town.

We are told that Nazareth contained three or four thousand inhabitants. This estimate is certainly excessive. Judging by the small area which it covered, Nazareth was a mere village. It is true that in the Orient men and beasts can huddle themselves into a very small space; but we cannot credit more than fifteen hundred or two thousand inhabitants to a village which had only one synagogue, one fountain, and one public square.

The fountain is still there. Springs do not change. That of Nazareth is to-day what it always was, — the gathering-place of the women and young girls, who come twice a day to draw the water needed for the household.

Let us imagine ourselves in the first

century. Here they come, with alert step; and among them Mary, the wife of Joseph the carpenter, carrying her empty water-jar crosswise on her head. She waits for her turn, chats with her companions, fills her pitcher, and goes away, with the graceful, flexible step which is that of all the women of her country. Her dress consists of wide trousers which leave bare the lower part of the leg, and a robe with open sleeves which leave her arms also exposed. A few coins gleam among the braids of her hair. When Jesus, her eldest son, has grown a little older, he will come with his mother and will help her to fill and carry her pitcher. Later he will come alone, to spare Mary all fatigue; and, to quote from the simple-hearted chronicler of 1187: *Au ruissel de cele fontaine lavait Nostre Dame les drapels de coi ele envelopet Nostre Seigneur. De cele fontaine envoiait querre Nostre Dame par Nostre Seigneur, quant il fut un peu grant, et il y aloit volontiers.*[1]

[1] "At the stream from this fountain Our Lady washed the linen in which she wrapped Our Lord. To this fountain Our Lady sent Our Lord to bring water, when he was a little grown; and he went willingly." — *La Citez de Jérusalem.*

Mary returns home. Her house is low and square, with a court before it and a terrace on the roof. Let us enter. We are in a large room without windows, and filled with all sorts of utensils. The door is wide, and by day is always open, and the brilliant light of the Orient enters in floods. There are no tables, but there are rugs, and on the walls are hung a few garments, robes and veils.

The dwelling is narrow, and the family numerous. Joseph and Mary have at least seven children. There are, to begin with, five sons: the eldest bears the name Jehoshua, and the others are Yakob, Joseph, Youda, Shimeôn, — that is, Jesus, James, Joseph, Jude, and Simon. As to the daughters we know neither their names nor their number; but Joseph and Mary have at least two.[1] These nine people, perhaps more, all live in the one room of this house; and this room serves for all purposes.[2] Here Joseph works at his carpenter's trade; here all the family

[1] "His sisters." Mark vi. 3.

[2] "The one room." This was the usual condition; but it is very possible that Joseph and Mary had a house of two or three rooms.

sleep; they all take their meals here, and here also Mary does the cooking.

The walls of this poor dwelling are not of stone, not even of brick. They are made of sun-dried clay. An outer staircase gives access to the roof, which forms a terrace, the floor of which, a mixture of chalk and sand with small pebbles and ashes, has become a sort of hardened soil which shows here and there a sparse vegetation. In summer, on fine starlight nights, all the family sleep here, each one rolled in his blanket, for the heat of the common room is insupportable, and the swarming insects make it almost intolerable to stay there.

An inventory of Joseph's household goods would show, first of all, a carpenter's bench like our own, and its tools; a kitchen furnace with two places, a sheet of iron for roasting wheat or baking bread; a few leathern bottles, some wooden bowls, one or two earthen pitchers, some goblets and cups; and that is all. Joseph and Mary have no plates, no forks or spoons. The beds are mere pallets, rolled up every morning and placed upon an elevated plank running along the walls. A

few mats and cushions upon which people squat after the oriental fashion, and a great chest, complete the furniture. During the warm season this chest holds the rugs and blankets. Besides these articles Joseph and Mary possess a lamp, a bushel, a broom, and a mill. The lamp is very tall, and stands on the floor. It is made of clay, has two or three wicks, and burns oil. The bushel serves as a measure, a drawer, and a bag. Turned bottom upward on the floor, it takes the place of the table which is not there. Sometimes they place the lamp upon it when they wish to raise the light and illuminate the whole room.

As for the mill, it is for hand use; and every morning Mary, with the help of one of her daughters, must turn the crank and grind the grain needed for the day's bread.

It is noon, the hour of the principal meal. Before sitting down to table, the whole family wash their hands. This ablution has a religious character, and it would be more exact to say they purify their hands. At a later day Jesus will declare these purifications useless, and will

no longer practise them; but he is now a child: he submits to the regulations of his pious parents, which are those of the Law of his people.

Before squatting down in oriental fashion, Joseph gives thanks, and Jesus, the eldest child, repeats a part of his prayer. At the close of the meal another thanksgiving will be pronounced.

Each one has a loaf before him. It is a sort of flat round cake which serves also as plate, and on which each puts his portion of butter or of cheese. Furthermore, there is a dish on the bottom of the upturned bushel; and each one at table, after having broken his bread, dips his morsel in the dish before eating.

What is there in this dish? Usually curdled milk or a porridge made of barley or wheat. In addition to butter and cheese there are also eggs, honey, and parched grain. These form the ordinary food of the carpenter's family. Meat is scarce and dear. If any is bought on feast days, it is beef, mutton, or kid. In summer a few grapes and figs complete the dinner. Sometimes, in the season, there are locusts. If so, the children must have

gathered them. They are prepared by reducing the body to a powder, which is mingled with flour to make a sort of cake, very much appreciated.

In the goblet, which is passed around the circle, each one drinking in turn, there is sometimes water mingled with wine; but the ordinary drink of the family is a sort of small beer made of wheat and fruits, and called *shechar*.

The meal ended, each resumes his work until evening, when another meal, even more frugal than the earlier one, again brings the family together.

They were poor in the house of the Nazareth carpenter, but they did not suffer from poverty, for among Jews of that time the word "poverty" was never synonymous with "indigence" or "want." The requirements of life were very few, and needs created by modern civilization were unknown. Such conveniences as we are accustomed to did not exist, and Joseph, Mary, and their children suffered no privation. Things which we could with difficulty do without, comforts which have become necessary to us, were not in the least missed by the carpenter and his

family, for they knew nothing about them and felt no need of them.

What were the first religious notions received by the child Jesus? Very early he knew by heart certain verses of the Bible. As soon as he began to speak, his mother made a point of repeating to him verses of the Law; and first of all she taught him those which proclaim the unity of God and the election of Israel: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is One Lord. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy might."[1] "The Lord did not set his love upon you nor choose you because ye were more in number than any people, for ye were the fewest of all peoples; but because the Lord loveth you."[2] When the child could repeat these two verses perfectly, his mother taught him others. After a while she put into his hands strips of parchment upon which were written the words which he knew by heart. Thus he finally came to know his letters, and, repeating these verses often with his little playmates, he soon learned to read.

[1] Deut. vi. 4, 5.
[2] Deut. vii. 7.

The day came when his mother explained to him the meaning of the words he was repeating. She told him of God and of the creation. She related to him the glorious history of the past, — Abraham willing to offer up Isaac; Jacob and the ladder of light; Moses and the burning bush; the coming up out of Egypt and the passage of the Red Sea; David and his victories; Judas Maccabæus and the triumph of national independence. Jesus early knew all these marvellous stories of the Old Testament. The commandments of Jehovah, his promises, his warnings, were graven on his mind in ineffaceable characters.

His family was assuredly very pious, adhering closely to the strictest Judaism, for every year his father and mother made part of the little caravan of Nazarenes who went up to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover; and James, the next younger brother of Jesus, remained in manhood, even after his conversion to Christianity, a rigid and austere Jew, practising a narrow and minute piety, careful to omit no rite and to observe all the purifications. Without question this was due to impressions re-

ceived in infancy in a home which was very orthodox and closely bound up in the national hopes. The piety of Jesus was no doubt of another character; and therefore it early began to distress his mother and brothers. The day was to come when they would try to hold him back, to keep him with them; would even go so far as to suspect him of insanity. From all this we may conclude with certainty that the most scrupulous attachment to pharisaical observances, and an entire submission to all the prescriptions of the Law, were the fixed rule of daily life in the carpenter's house.

When Jesus was six years old, his parents sent him to school. That of Nazareth was held in the synagogue, the audience-room serving for schoolroom during the week.[1] The schoolmaster was the personage who had charge of the building and of the manuscripts of the Sacred Books, and watched over the orderly conduct of the service on the Sabbath days.

[1] This was the custom in the villages. In cities and large towns (and perhaps Nazareth was of this number) the school probably occupied a building contiguous to the synagogue.

Jesus attended this school until he was ten or twelve years old. At this age he knew how to read, write, and calculate. He then became a "Son of the Commandment;" that is, he began to be subject to the discipline of the Law. Every morning and evening he must recite the *Shema*,[1] a few verses of which he had known since infancy; for every morning and night, over the whole extent of Palestinian territory, the Jews hastily muttered these verses as one tells one's beads. Jesus never approved of these "vain repetitions." The day came when he formally condemned them. But at twelve years of age he recited the Shema like every one else; and these nineteen verses certainly became the subject of his first religious reflections.

To this must be added what he learned on Saturdays (the Sabbath) at a synagogue service designed especially for children. It was a sort of catechizing to which Mary had been especially advised to send him regularly. Therefore, next to his mother,

[1] The *Shema* contains nineteen verses, Deut. vi. 4–9; xi. 13–21; Num. xv. 37–41. The name comes from the first word, *Shema*, which means *Hear*.

it was the schoolmaster who first initiated him in the reading of the Old Testament.

Thus passed the early years of Jesus. What impressions must have been made upon his soul by his home, his parents, his brothers and sisters, the family life in which he had been so happy! How often he must have recalled them to mind at a later time: the paternal home, the "father who gave good things to his children,"[1] the little village boys with whom he had played at marriages and burials, when he amused himself with them in imitating the village wedding-dances or in uttering the lamentations of the hired mourners who attended funeral services, — what sweet and peaceful memories of the time when he had only to let himself be loved!

Such was the placid and humble childhood of him who holds the first place in the history of humanity, and who has exercised a decisive influence upon the destinies of the world; of him whose work is, without contradiction, the most remarkable which the annals of the past have bequeathed to our meditation; and whose life divides the history of our race into two parts which nothing can ever blend together.

[1] Matt. vii. 11.

II

EARLY BELIEFS

CHAPTER II

EARLY BELIEFS

THE child believes upon authority; he accepts all that his teachers tell him. He is surprised at nothing, and never dreams of raising a doubt concerning such affirmations as are given him as indisputable truths. At a later time he examines his early beliefs; perhaps he abandons them, and if he keeps them it is as changed into deliberate personal convictions; but he must have begun with unquestioning submission, and if he was brought up by believing parents he accepted all their religious teachings, and clung to them in all good faith.

This was certainly the case with Jesus. Brought up in a pious family, he believed what every young Israelite of that time believed. The faith of his childhood, simple, artless, confident, was that of Joseph and Mary, that of the pious circles

of Galilee at that time. It is made known to us by the Jewish books of that epoch, and by some of the representative characters whose memory has been preserved to us.

We can know then with sufficient accuracy what Jesus believed in his childhood, and what were the beliefs which he received on authority and for which he was not in the slightest degree responsible.

What did Joseph and Mary teach their son when he began to grow up and understand things?

The two eldest, Jesus and James, must have received the same religious education; and that which later James became and remained until the end of his life may show us what that education was, for his nature was essentially conservative. We have said that even after becoming a Christian he retained an ineffaceable stamp of Judaism. In many respects he remained what he had always been. All his life James energetically defended the Jewish law and privileges. He was very faithful to the temple and the synagogue; he never ceased to expect the glorious Messiah of the

Pharisees, and was in his own person an ascetic, half Ebionite, half Essene. Legend adds to these authentic characteristics the statements that he was holy before his birth; that he never drank wine nor fermented liquor, never shaved his head nor anointed himself with oil; and that he passed his time always on his knees in prayer, — a fancy picture, a few lines of which may be historic; nor is it assuming too much to draw from it the conclusion at which we have already arrived, that the family of the carpenter of Nazareth was in all probability one of profound and ardent piety.

But can we create anew the atmosphere of this family life in which Jesus lived, at that age when one accepts everything and recoils from nothing? Can we say what was the current of ideas and facts, of beliefs and practices, in which James permitted himself to be carried along, and against which Jesus was one day to struggle?

Two facts govern here, — the expectation of a glorious Messiah, and the doctrine that the fulfilling of the Law justified man before God. Joseph and Mary taught

Jesus that he must be very scrupulous in the practice of the rites, and very faithful in looking for "the Consolation of Israel."

Now, these two beliefs were precisely those upon which Jesus at a later time struck out new and entirely original ideas, — ideas which became the very ground of the opposition which he aroused and its reason for being.

Underlying these beliefs, if one may so speak, in the very depths of the child's soul, there was a primitive religious teaching, common to all Jews of his time without exception, which Mary must have given to her son somewhat on this wise. She taught him, first of all, to believe in a single God who is the only true God, creator of heaven and earth; who chose the people Israel to be his own preferred people, and who would one day — a day not far off — give Israel the supremacy over all nations. These were certainly the first religious notions which the child received.

That his people were the chosen people there was no room to doubt, for there was a book which said so, — the Torah, dictated by God to Moses from the first word to

the last. More than that, Jerusalem was the centre of the world, and all other countries surrounded Palestine, which showed that Palestine was the "Holy Land," and that the Jews were destined to rule over all peoples.

The earth was a very large flat disk, around which revolved the sun, the moon, and the stars, and God was up above the sky; that is, in heaven, beyond the blue surface which we see over our heads. From thence he ruled the world and its inhabitants.

The child learned also that the world was in two parts, — the land of Israel and that which was not the land of Israel. Men were divided into two classes, — Jews and Gentiles; that is, those who are "within" and those who are "without." Beyond the land occupied by the Gentiles, the child was told, lay the sea, whose vast extent no one knew.

In heaven were all the righteous people who had hitherto lived. Abraham was the highest of them all. An everlasting feast was carried on, and the best people were at the table, "lying in Abraham's bosom."

Besides this, in heaven was the throne of God, surrounded by hundreds of legions of angels, each in his own rank. The highest, those who were nearest the Almighty, were the archangels. All of them sang the praises of God. Some of them were also his messengers to man; for God, who dwelt in light inaccessible, could enter into relations with a sinful world only by means of intermediaries. Now and again men saw angels, who appeared to them sometimes in dreams, sometimes when they were awake. They watched over and protected good people, and carried their prayers to the throne of God, and were therefore true guardian angels. Every one had his own, who made known to God the dangers which threatened him over whom he was watching, and implored for him divine aid. When a good man died, angels came and carried him to heaven. If his piety had been great, he was laid in the very bosom of Abraham, and shared with him the everlasting feast. There were angels who remained always in heaven to contemplate the glory of God or pray for men. Angels had played an important part in the history of the

chosen people. It was they who built the ark and gave the Law to Moses, and it was they who always guarded the Temple treasure. More than that, every natural force had its angel, — the rain, the dew, the wind, the fog, the hail, the fire, etc. Every one was sure of all this. Only the Sadducees did not believe in angels.

There was also another invisible world, called the Kingdom of Darkness, or Kingdom of Satan. This was the name of its prince, who ruled with the permission of God. This Satan, who was also called Asmodeus, Belial, Beelzebub, Devil, was a very real and living personage, who tormented men and led them into evil. He had innumerable hosts of demons under his orders, invisible and maleficent spirits, by whom people were constantly surrounded. For this reason the demons were sometimes called "the powers of the air." They usually wandered in deserts and uninhabited places, especially such as were arid.

These demons were the cause of nearly all disease. They also made men fall into sin. And indeed there was a very close relation between moral evil and physical

evil. It sometimes happened that a demon, or even the chief of demons, Satan, took entire possession of a person, body and soul. The wretched man might even be the prey of several demons at the same time. It was always possible to expel them. God had given to pious men, especially to Doctors and Rabbis, the power to cast out demons. They alone knew how to heal; and for this they had their well-defined procedure, — laying on of hands, prayers, fasts, etc. Each one had his own, and for this reason the Rabbis were to be held in the greatest respect.

These healings were called "signs;" that is, marks of the presence of a superior power which was beneficent, or rather of the one superior beneficent power, that of God. There were also "signs" which were the tokens of the presence of a superior evil-working power, or rather of the one superior evil-working power, that of the Devil.

These divers potencies, these invisible "powers," unceasingly made their presence known, and therefore nothing extraordinary, unfamiliar, extravagant, was impossible. Many had seen these signs, these

miracles, and everybody desired to see them. "The Jews ask for signs;"[1] and Joseph and Mary, like every one else, certainly believed in the supernatural under the strangest forms, — for example, in spirits which had never had bodies, or in angels of fire, of water and of wind, that is, in an invisible world which in all places and at all times made known its presence and its activities.

It is difficult for us at this day to picture to ourselves the exact state of mind which holds beliefs of this kind. If, for example, we are told of a sudden cure taking place in our own time, however surprising it may be, we always explain it by the action of natural forces, known or unknown. It is nature which has acted; this we do not for an instant doubt. If any one told us that a resurrection from the dead had taken place among our contemporaries, even if we had seen it ourselves, we should immediately explain it either by a lethargic slumber or in some other way; but even if we could not explain it, we should not for a moment admit that a true resurrection had taken place in our own time, — that is

[1] 1 Cor. i. 22.

to say, that life had returned to a body actually dead. In short, at the present day we always, without hesitation, seek for a natural explanation of everything that seems to be a miracle; and if we do not find such an explanation, we do not affirm with any less certainty that it does exist.

In the time when Jesus was growing up it was entirely the other way. Though one might not at once admit, and find it perfectly easy to admit, the most surprising miracle, — the resurrection of a dead person, for example, — asking for proofs of the fact, at least no one was very exacting as to the proof, for there was nothing impossible in the prodigy itself. Everything was possible, absolutely everything, no matter what. In our day we declare everything that is out of the natural order of things to be *a priori* impossible. Perhaps we are wrong; perhaps we are too much carried away with the notion of the immutability of natural laws, and it is highly possible that the future may bring a corrective to the inflexible rigor with which we reject all that does not appear to us to be conformable to the known order of the

universe. But for the time, thus it is; and therefore we find some difficulty in representing to ourselves the effect which a miracle had upon the mind of an inhabitant of Palestine in the first century. The science of medicine did not exist. Empirical remedies were the only ones employed, and every one had his own. Resurrection from the dead was held to be a perfectly possible and even a very probable thing.

The firm persuasion of the speedy appearance of the Messiah belonged to this order of supernatural beliefs. Without the slightest doubt the parents of Jesus had told their son that there would be in the very near future a sudden revolution which would be marked by the appearance of a Deliverer. The present was a time of great calamity. The nation was in humiliation, and under the Roman yoke the people felt severely the loss of that liberty which the Maccabees had formerly conquered for them.

The great events of that glorious epoch were certainly often related to the child Jesus, and contrasted with the present sad condition. Nothing more was to be expected of man, but everything might be

expected of God. They were living in the last times; and the words *Maran atha*,[1] which Paul has preserved in their original form, must often have been sounded in the child's ears.

What if the Messiah is already born? they would say. For he is to remain hidden until the day of his manifestation. However, there will be signs at the last moment. Elias will first appear; then will come the Messiah, who will be only a man, but a superior man, an ideal being, the Anointed of the Lord, the King of Israel. He will be a prophet, and will commit no sin. His days will be days of consolation. While awaiting him, we must lead a pious and austere life, with strict attention to the Pharisaic observances.

When the world to come should begin, the good would have a new body, and the wicked would be eternally punished. Jerusalem, which would have become the capital of the world, would be all of gold, cypress, and cedar. A perpetual Sabbath would be celebrated in the Temple, and the kings of the earth would prostrate themselves before the Jews.

[1] "The Lord is at hand." 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

This era of prosperity would be established only after a series of terrible woes, which would form the transition between "the present age" and "the age to come." For this reason the humble folk, the villagers, looked forward with great fear to the coming of the Messianic era. The fiery-tongued Pharisaic preachers used to come and tell them of frightful calamities, the conflict between Gog and Magog, famines, wars, earthquakes. "But," they would add, and these words brought comfort again to the suffering and the poor, "after that, righteousness will reign. God, who has laid the burden of life upon the lowly, cannot have done it without intending to make compensation." Let them observe the Law and the traditions; they would thus acquire merits which would confer upon them rights before God, and then the last should be first. And the humble folk would resume their tasks with patience after this glimpse of future triumph, this vision of the eternal Jerusalem.[1]

[1] Here we simply set forth the current ideas of the populace concerning the expected Messiah. Farther on, in the chapter entitled "Studies and Reading," we

To learn to obey the Law one must study it. But the Law was not the only divine book. All the writings bequeathed by the past were such; and one should read the history of the nation, and meditate upon the prophecies in the volume entitled "The Prophets." There were, besides, other books very important for those to read who wish to be informed concerning "that which is soon to come to pass." Finally, the traditions of the fathers were themselves divinely inspired. But the Law was before all the others. To expect the Messiah and practise the Law, — here in two words was the whole duty of the believing Jew.

The practice of the Law was essential to justification before God. The moral

shall give a fuller account of the Messianic ideas of the Jews of that period, according to their sacred books, and we shall again return to the subject in the chapter entitled "The Messianic Ideal of Jesus at Thirty Years of Age." These distinctions are essential to the understanding of the development of Jesus' ideas on this important subject; for there was in his experience, first, his childish beliefs, the artless notions prevalent among the people; second, what his own reading taught him; and finally, the notions which he received at thirty years of age, when he became convinced that he was himself the expected Messiah.

life inhered solely in legal prescriptions. To love one's neighbor was no doubt important; but it was precisely as important to give the tithe of one's harvest, to abstain from eating pork, and not take more than the permitted number of steps on the Sabbath day.

It is easy to understand that Jesus must from the first have felt the need of recoil from this position; and the breath of resistance with which from the first day his teachings were inspired had perhaps its origin in the narrow and petty character of the prescriptions to which he had submitted in his early home, and to which his brother James gave himself with the most rigorous obedience. For in his parents' house Jesus must above all things have learned to perform the rites, to recite the *Shema*, not to omit a single purification, to have the sacred fringes on his mantle and the phylacteries on his arms. It is extremely probable that Joseph and Mary submitted, though certainly with true piety and profoundly religious feeling, to all the minutiæ of Pharisaic devotion. The Pharisees had regulated everything, and every one knew what was his duty in

the matter of walking, standing still, working, resting, eating, sleeping, journeying.

We picture to ourselves Joseph and Mary as two simple-hearted, trustful Galileans, doing everything that the Scribes ordained because they sincerely believed that God himself had thus ordained. They inculcated in their children a respect for religious belief and practice, the regular and assiduous accomplishment of ritual duty, and submission in all which went beyond that. They believed without discussing and without understanding, waiting in faith for him who would "exalt the humble and cast down the proud." They belonged to the humble; they had been taught that poverty was a merit, that the lower classes alone were true patriots, that wealth was a sin, and that the rich were impious because they were rich.

Such was the strange mixture of truth and error with which the soul of the child Jesus was first imbued.

Did he at once reject the error by that profound and unerring intuition which he had all his life? We do not doubt it for

a moment. If he submitted to the rites and observed them as he ought to have done at the age when a child should submit, he was, first of all, obeying his God, that Father whose "things" always occupied him; and the disquietude into which his conduct in the Temple was one day to plunge the minds of his parents was certainly only one incident in the disquietude which from that day forward he was often to cause them by the independence of mind which he early showed in the face of manifest error. No doubt he believed in angels and demons. He believed that the Law was dictated by God, and he at first believed that the Messiah would reign on earth; but he never admitted that the performance of rites makes man right with God, and that legal purifications can take the place of conversion.

The religious instruction which was imposed upon him by authority awakened in his soul a great desire, an imperative need, to think things out for himself, to form his own convictions; in a word, to study by every means which God might put within his reach, and to occupy himself with "the things of his Father," while

still remaining an obedient and respectful son. For he felt something within himself which transcended and dominated all this religion of his parents, something which protested, which understood what they did not understand. He felt himself to be superior to them. What was about to take place in the soul of this child?

III

JESUS AT TWELVE YEARS OF AGE

CHAPTER III

JESUS AT TWELVE YEARS OF AGE

THE man who does a great work and strongly influences his time is always aided by circumstances. He is often indeed, as it were, created by them. Genius, however great, does not suffice to him who initiates a movement; it is also necessary that the moment when genius can put forth its full powers shall be precisely the moment in which he lives. Luther, born a hundred years earlier, would not have made the Reformation, and Napoleon was served by events even more than by his own genius.

Jesus was not an exception to this common law. When he was born, the time, to use the picturesque expression of the Gospel, "was fulfilled." Judaism had completed its religious evolution, and Paganism had reached the limit of its speculations and experiments. What the

first century needed was a great social and religious renovation.

It was inaugurated by him whose youth we are trying to describe; and among the number of the events which taught him, enlightened him, hastened the efflorescence of his religious consciousness, we must place in the front rank the scene that St. Luke has preserved to us, which took place when the child was twelve years old.

Every year Joseph and Mary made the journey to the Holy City for the Feast of the Passover, joining the little group of pious folk of Nazareth who held to the strict accomplishment of the Law. To take Jesus with them as soon as he was twelve years old was considered by his parents an imperative duty. The child had certainly been prepared by his mother for the coming of this great day. To leave home; to see Jerusalem and the Temple; to be initiated into the sacred rite of the Paschal Lamb, for which his parents had such great respect, and for which they made such sacrifices, — how often had he not looked forward to it!

The route which the little caravan took

was from this time forth traversed by Jesus every year. Besides the Feast of the Passover, that of Tabernacles and still others must have drawn him to Jerusalem; and therefore it comes to pass that this road, which still exists, is of all the roads of Palestine that which Jesus most often traversed.

On quitting Nazareth the little band of worshippers turned their steps toward the Jordan valley, for they must not pass through Samaria. They therefore went toward the southeast, and after having crossed the great caravan route between Egypt and Damascus, they passed Shunem, the home of Elisha's Shunamite[1] and Jezreel,[2] crossing the valley of that name. From Jezreel the travellers went to Beth-shan, also called Scythopolis.[3] This was the first stage.

Nine hours of walking lay between them and Nazareth; the Jordan valley opened before them. Here they halted, set up their tents, and passed the night. Scythopolis was a great fortified town, filled with

[1] 1 Kings iv. 8–37.
[2] Now Zerin.
[3] Now Beisân.

heathen buildings, temples, theatres, places of amusement. It overlooked the river from an eminence of a hundred metres.

On the morrow the pilgrims, who had been most careful not to enter the city so as not to incur uncleanness by contact with heathen, resumed their march, following the valley, which was covered with rich pasturage and crossed by many brooks. They passed Succoth [1] and Archelais,[2] an entirely new city lately built by Archelaus, Herod's son.

This second stage was of about twelve hours. Again the caravan camped in the fields to avoid entering a heathen town. On the third day, in about four hours, they reached Phasaelis, also a new town, for it had been founded by Herod the Great in honor of his son Phasael. In four hours more they were in Jericho.

From Jericho to Jerusalem was only a six hours' journey, and this had to be left for the fourth and last day. This final stage of the journey was rendered extremely difficult by the stifling heat, due to the depression of the Jordan valley. For the

[1] Now Sqoût.
[2] Now Kerbet-Makherut.

valley is in fact shut in between two ranges of hills, and the temperature sometimes becomes intolerable. It is true that it was now springtime, about Easter, and precisely the season when the journey could be made under the least unfavorable circumstances.

Let us add that the road was not safe. From Jerusalem to Jericho and all along the Jordan valley attacks of robbers were frequent, and the men of the Nazareth party were certainly all armed. By day, when the travellers had nothing to fear, they sang the Pilgrim Psalms,[1] and we can picture to ourselves Jesus, at the evening halt, helping Joseph to set up the tent, while Mary prepared supper, and all, before retiring, reciting Psalm cxxi., which was the hymn for the close of day, —

I will lift up mine eyes to the hills,
From whence cometh my help.
My help cometh from the LORD,
Who made heaven and earth.
He will not permit thy foot to stumble:
He who keepeth thee will not slumber.
Behold, He will not slumber nor sleep
Who guardeth Israel.

[1] Psalms cxx.–cxxxiv.

The Lord is thy keeper:
The Lord is thy shade on thy right hand.
The sun shall not smite thee by day,
Nor the moon by night.
The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil:
He will preserve thy soul.
The Lord shall preserve thy going out and
thy coming in
From this time forth and for evermore.

Jericho, the city of palm-trees, was a charming city, the first in which our pilgrims could take a little rest, for it was the only one not infested with Gentiles. The whole surrounding country was covered with palm groves mingled with gardens and cultivated fields.

Between Jericho and Jerusalem they first crossed a wide, arid, stony plain, somewhat like a desert. Then the road ascended rapidly, and forced its way between two almost vertical walls of gigantic rocks. The road, the remains of which still exist and are easy to follow, continued to ascend, and becoming steeper and steeper was at times nothing less than a veritable staircase hewn out of the rock. All around were bare and fissured heights. From time to time, in a yawning gulf far below,

was seen the torrent of Kidron, silvery as a thread of foam.

After this toilsome march by wild and steep paths which justify the expression "go up to Jerusalem," they arrived at Bethany, one of the villages best loved by Jesus, and the acquaintance of which he made now for the first time.

Jerusalem was near at hand; but it could not yet be seen, being hidden by the Mount of Olives. Just this hill to climb, and within ten minutes after leaving Bethany, suddenly the plain unrolled, revealing the splendid panorama of the city crowned by its gigantic Temple.

They from Nazareth stood still and gazed. There, first of all, was the height of Mount Zion; next that of Moriah, crowned with the walls which encircle the sanctuary. The majestic scene was new to Jesus. The city seemed like an almost impregnable place. A thick and high wall, furnished with sixty towers, completely surrounded it. Within the enclosure appeared a mass of flat-roofed buildings closely huddled together. It was like a multitude of small cubes of white stone standing out against the blue sky, at

unequal altitudes, for the city is built upon hills.

The panorama which the child Jesus had before his eyes was the very one which he was to have on Palm Sunday, five days before his death; and he was standing on the spot where he would then weep over the city and its people. Did he think on that Palm Sunday of his childish impressions, and of that other day which also preceded by a very little the Paschal Feast, when, twenty-one years before, this sacred place had appeared before him for the first time? At last he was looking upon the Temple, which he had so often pictured to himself, with its golden roof sparkling in the sunlight!

But they must keep on to the end of their journey. The path descended obliquely. They went through the valley of Gethsemane, crossed the Kidron, and five minutes later entered the city by the Sheep Gate, the very gate by which Jesus was to go out on that Thursday night which was the last before his death. They were all singing the One Hundred and Twenty-second Psalm, "Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem!"

These poor folk from Nazareth must have very much resembled the pilgrims of the present day who come from the heart of Russia or elsewhere to kneel in the Holy Sepulchre, whose simple and ardent piety provokes smiles among those who are surfeited with the emotions of the Holy Places. Their devotion certainly reproduces in its essential features that of the Galileans of the early time.

The latter did not lodge in the town, for the number of its inhabitants, which in general was from sixty to eighty thousand, was increased at feast-times to unheard-of, incredible proportions. They were therefore obliged to camp outside upon the Mount of Olives.

The garden of "the Oil-press," where Jesus was arrested, belonged to a friend, who had there a farmstead serving as country-house. Who knows whether the habit which he formed later of always passing the night outside of the city, upon the Mount of Olives, did not date from his childhood, springing from time-honored relations of his family with some inhabitant of this place?

However this may have been, Joseph,

Mary, and the child made no delay in going to the Temple. To do this they were compelled to make a considerable ascent, for it was situated on one of the hills enclosed by the wall of the city.

The Temple, above all other things, fixed their attention. It resembled a fortress, for a formidable wall of defence surrounded it on all sides. Joseph, Mary, and the child, accompanied, no doubt, by other Nazarenes, "their kinsfolk and acquaintance,"[1] entered the enclosure by a great arched gate, and found themselves in an immense court, with porticos running around the inner side of the walls.

In the midst Jesus saw venders, money-changers, and buyers inveighing against one another; for the first time he heard the insulting remarks of Sadducees and the vociferations of Pharisees. Impassible Roman soldiers were mounting guard just as Turkish soldiers do to-day; and all in one moment the child had before his eyes

[1] Luke ii. 44. These relatives may have been Zebedee and Salome, father and mother of James and John. We believe, although these questions of relationship are difficult to solve, that Salome was Mary's sister, and that James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were cousins-german of Jesus.

a view of the profanation of the Holy Place, the narrowness and hatred of the religious parties who directed the nation, and the oppression of the foreigner who held it in custody under a yoke of iron. His religious and patriotic feelings were at once excited and wounded. It was the first contact of Jesus with the priests, who looked down upon the poor pilgrims coming to offer their ardent devotion,— Galileans, who spoke with so displeasing an accent, and, worse still, Nazarenes from a village out of which nothing good could come.

The pilgrims, however, crossed the great court without pausing; they were in haste to pass through the Beautiful Gate, and enter the enclosure into which none but Israelites might come. Here Mary remained. It was the Court of the Women; they were not permitted to go farther. Joseph and Jesus went on into the court called "Of Israel," the place reserved for men. Before them was the Platform of the Benedictions, from which the priest blessed the assembled people. Behind it arose the smoke of the great altar of sacrifice, and, still beyond, the door of the Holy

Place, which only the priests might enter. Father and child bowed themselves and worshipped.

But the pilgrims had come not merely to see; they had come to celebrate the Passover. Jesus already knew what festival this was; he knew every one of the details of the solemnity about to take place, and the great memories which it celebrated had long been familiar to him.

Joseph's first care was to procure a lamb for the sacrifice. This was easy; they were for sale everywhere. But the price was high for one in his circumstances. At the birth of Jesus his mother was able to offer only the turtle-doves of the poor; and no doubt the carpenter of Nazareth had been laying aside, for months past, the money necessary for the purchase of the lamb. The animal chosen, Joseph carried it on his shoulders to the Temple, followed by the child. At the entrance of the Court of the Priests he handed it over to those who conducted the sacrifice. They took it from him and offered it upon the altar, a blast of the trumpet giving the signal for the sacrifice.

We may imagine the child's emotion,

the questions that he asked, and all that passed in his soul at the sight of this sacrifice.

The animal was flayed and drawn. Its entrails and its fat were thrown upon the fire. Joseph lifted up the carcass and carried it away to prepare, with Mary's help, the sacred feast. The animal was roasted, and not boiled. Not one of its bones was broken, and all that might not be eaten was to be burned in the fire.

In earlier days it had been the custom to partake of this feast standing, with staff in hand, ready for departure, thus to reproduce in all its details the scene of the departure from Egypt on the night of deliverance. But this custom had long since fallen into disuse. Every one was seated, in oriental fashion, on cushions and carpets. The sacred feast was celebrated after a ritual order. Four times the cup made the round of the table. After the first round bitter herbs were brought to be eaten with the unleavened bread. These bitter herbs, steeped in vinegar, were a reminder of the sufferings formerly endured in Egypt.

At this moment Jesus, according to cus-

tom, asked Joseph the meaning of all that was passing before his eyes. He repeated the question twice, and his father replied with the story of the exodus from Egypt, closing his narrative with the words: "We ought to praise, celebrate, honor, and magnify Him who did these great and marvellous things for our fathers, and led them from bondage to liberty, from sorrow to joy, from darkness to a great light. Let us then say 'Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!'" At these words the whole family sang Psalms cxiii. and cxiv. Then the meal went on, and after the fourth and last cup those present sang Psalms cxv., cxvi., cxvii., cxviii. This was the end.

The memory of this evening left an ineffaceable impression upon Jesus' mind. Of all the rites of his people the Paschal Feast was certainly that one to which he was the most attached. He found a great sweetness in celebrating it year after year with those whom he loved; and the evening before his death he said to his apostles, "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer."[1]

The next day was the first and great

[1] Luke xxii. 15.

day of the feast, which had been begun the evening before by the Paschal Feast, for the Jews did not count the day from midnight to midnight, as we do, but from six in the evening until six in the evening of the next day. It was not permitted to work on either of these days.

On the next day but one they offered in the Temple a sheaf of the new harvest. During the seven days of the festival every one ate unleavened bread. On the last day it was still obligatory to be present. It was expressly forbidden to depart from Jerusalem before the seven days were completed.

When all had been done, Joseph and Mary set off with the Nazareth caravan. We know what happened. "The boy Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and his parents knew it not, but supposing him to be in the company, they went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance."[1]

So it came about that they had gone as far as Jericho, and perhaps farther, without being disturbed by the absence of Jesus. "When they found him not, they returned to Jerusalem seeking for him."[2]

[1] Luke ii. 44. [2] Luke ii. 45.

With hearts torn by anguish they therefore retraced their steps up that steep, dangerous, rocky road which lies between Jericho and Jerusalem, and which they had passed over with Jesus only eight days previously.

"And after three days they found him in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and his answers. And when they saw him they were astonished: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be in the things of my Father? And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them; and his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."[1]

[1] Luke ii. 47–52.

IV

FIRST IMPRESSIONS AND EXPERIENCES

CHAPTER IV

FIRST IMPRESSIONS AND EXPERIENCES

ON their return to Nazareth Jesus began to learn his trade under Joseph's direction; for he was the eldest, and he must toil to aid his parents in bringing up his younger brothers and sisters. A child of twelve was at that time, in the East, as well developed, physically and intellectually, as a child of fifteen is to-day in our western, modern world. Jesus would later be called "the carpenter's son;"[1] and people would see him accompanying his father, sharing his severe toil, and early learning to feel himself a responsible being.

After a time Joseph died; everything leads us to believe that it was not long after this, for he is no longer spoken of, and Jesus, the carpenter's son, becomes "the carpenter."[2]

[1] Matt. xiii. 55. [2] Mark vi. 3.

He therefore went on with the paternal calling, and soon became the support of his mother and the head of the family. For long years he worked at this most laborious of trades, being, no doubt, the only carpenter in the village. He would put roofs upon new houses and mend the old ones. Clothed in the humble garments of the working-man, — a simple woollen tunic, and a turban upon his head, — he went about his work, squaring beams, wielding the hatchet and axe, directing the men who helped him, returning home at evening to eat the bread and hard-boiled eggs which his mother had prepared before taking from the wall the pallet and coverlid in which his weary limbs would gain a few hours of rest.

A few indications permit us to divine something of what he was among his own people, in the bosom of his family.

When in the upper chamber not one of his disciples was willing to wash the feet of the others, he, the Master, took upon himself this humble office. From this we may conclude that readiness to serve and to do acts of service must have been a feature of his character in childhood.

Another indication is his love of meditation and prayer. When we see him, from the beginning of his public life, passing entire nights in prayer, are we not catching a glimpse of a long habit? Had not prayer been in his youth "the breath of his soul"?

A third indication which forces itself upon us is tolerance, charity. In one of his first public preachings he spoke of loving one's enemies, of pardoning those who harm one, of giving without hoping to receive again. Who will dare to say that these precepts were not inspired in him by the sweet and vivid memory of the love which he had shown to every one at Nazareth? And finally, the solicitude with which he concerned himself with his mother in his dying moments, and his twofold utterance, "Behold thy son!" "Behold thy mother!"[1] speak plainly enough of the tenderness with which he had always surrounded her.

Thus Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men;[2] he passed from childhood to youth. He reached the age when the attention

[1] John xix. 27. [2] Luke ii. 52.

awakes; he put questions to himself; he observed what he saw, he reflected upon what he heard. Immediately after his first journey to Jerusalem, whatever may have been his manual labors, he began to occupy himself with "the things of his Father." The Chazzan,[1] his mother, and perhaps, also, some ruler of the synagogue had, until this time, been his only religious teachers. They no longer sufficed for him. To occupy himself with "the things of his Father" must have been, as his attitude in Jerusalem showed, to interrogate the Doctors and ask them questions. From this we conclude with certainty that he studied the religious parties of his people, and that his curious and questioning gaze took in everything which claimed religious authority.

Observation was an important factor in the education of Jesus. For example, it was to observation that he owed his entire practical theory of life. What he had not seen he did not know. He had not seen great capitals, great empires; he certainly never quitted Palestine, and he had only

[1] This was the name given to the functionary in charge of the synagogue and of the holy books.

an imperfect notion of the Roman Empire and the power of "Cæsar." No doubt, it may be said that when he describes kings as personages clothed in fine apparel, who live in palaces, with many slaves to do their bidding, going in their behalf to summon the people whom they have invited to dinner,[1] he used this childish language simply to put himself on the level of his hearers. None the less is it certain that he had never seen a king, and that he knew no other sovereign than the tetrarch Herod Antipas. He therefore could speak of the great ones of earth only by hearsay.

But whatever he had seen he knew. He had a gift of penetration, a power and keenness of vision, which were of extraordinary intensity; and the profundity of observation which the least of his parables presupposes is truly prodigious. He had seen everything in Nazareth, and was unaware of nothing which went on in that village.

The habits of men and of beasts; the manner of life of the animals in the woods, the fields, on the farms; the relations of laborers and proprietors; the price of vari-

[1] Matt. xi. 8; xviii. 23; xxii. 2 ff.; etc.

ous commodities; the habits of villagers; the fold in which the flocks are gathered by night; the shepherd who seeks the stray sheep; the hen calling her chickens to her; the necessity of a careful choice of ground for building; the time required for a grain of mustard seed to become a great tree; the destiny of different handfuls of seed cast by the sower, some lost for divers reasons, the rest dying in good ground in order to live again; the making of bread; the difference between old wine and new; the way to mend clothes, and the importance of washing the inside as well as the outside of a dish, — he was familiar with them all, and nothing in daily life was foreign to him.

He carried this gift of observation and of learning by observation, above all things, to the religious customs which prevailed around him. He certainly never attended the schools of the rabbis in Jerusalem, that of Hillel or that of Shammai. He was never seen among their pupils. He was a carpenter. The people of Nazareth knew him as such; and later, when men heard him speak, they marvelled precisely because he knew so many things and had

so much wisdom, though he was only "the carpenter."

But there is a long way from these facts to the conclusion that Jesus had not studied. It is certain to us that from his tenth to his fifteenth year he studied, in the school at Nazareth, the traditional law and the minute regulations of Israelitish life. He was too well acquainted with them for anything else to have been possible; and, besides, every young man who intended to sound these things even for a little way carried on such studies. No doubt Jesus possessed neither parchments nor diplomas; he was *autodidact*, that is to say, self-taught. But he was a Rabbi; he was called Rabbi Jehoshua Natserieh, that is, Rabbi Jesus of Nazareth. Now, this was a sort of profession, — a career into which it was necessary to be initiated by the acquisition of a certain amount of knowledge. Though any one might call himself Rabbi, he could nevertheless only do it in good earnest after preparing himself for his work.

A Rabbi was a personage whom people consulted, who healed the sick, had disciples, pronounced aphorisms and max-

ims. What had been the studies of Jesus? Certainly none which followed a well-defined programme, terminating in examinations which confer a title or a degree. Such studies, examinations, certificates, were the affair of the Doctors of the Law. The Rabbi was more free; in fact, he was entirely free. Rabbi was a name given by the people to whoever took the ascendant over them and rendered them services. But one could only gain this ascendant, and the authority which conferred upon a man the honor of being called Rabbi, after having acquired a certain knowledge; and this knowledge Jesus certainly had. He knew too well the strength and the weakness of the parties of his time not to have very narrowly observed these parties, and lived with them in closest contact.

Every Sabbath day after the Synagogue the pious men of the town came together to read and meditate, to discuss and argue. Who will believe that Jesus, after his fifteenth year, never went to this school of the Rabbis, where they gave themselves up to a thorough study of the Scriptures, beginning with Leviticus, passing in re-

view the entire Torah, and after that the Prophets? Jesus certainly was present at the meetings of this nature which must have been held in Nazareth. The proof that he frequented the places where the Scribes carried on their arguments is found in the fact that he learned their method of reasoning.

It was by arguments like theirs that he demonstrated that the resurrection of the dead is taught in the Pentateuch;[1] that he answered the Sadducees, who denied a future life,[2] and asked how the Messiah could be at the same time the Son of David and his Lord.[3] The rabbinical exegesis was familiar to him, because he learned it by hearing the Doctors expounding the Law and the Prophets. We may, then, hold it as certain that Jesus prepared himself for his ministry by a very serious and attentive study of and acquaintance with the Judaism of the schools.

He did more; he learned to speak. The splendid habit of public speech which he

[1] Matt. xxii. 31, 32; Mark xii. 26, 27; Luke xx. 37, 38.

[2] Matt. xxii. 23 ff.; Mark xii. 18 ff.; Luke xx. 27 ff.

[3] Matt. xxii. 45; Mark xii. 37.

had from the very first argues a preparation which was not a matter of a day. This preparation was so complete that during his ministry he always gave to his words the most admirably finished form, so finished that all trace of effort has disappeared. We can discover none; not even in his parables, the structure of which is so perfect. It is therefore impossible to say here what was the nature of Jesus' preparation; but it is none the less certain that he did prepare himself. If at a later time he was often compelled to improvise, it is evident that he had learned how to do it.

Jesus, then, like every other man, had made his preparation, — with the aid of circumstances he had created for himself tests and struggles which he must have fought out. He profited by all the methods of self-instruction which God had put within his reach. His character, his mind, his intelligence, his whole soul were incessantly growing during these eighteen years. He lent an ear to the lessons given by the events of the day, patriotic or religious; he became aware of the hostility of men, and was taught by it.

I hold it also to be highly probable that

Jesus passed some time in Jerusalem during the eighteen years that lay between him and public life. He must have continued to go up to the Paschal feasts; he perhaps went to other feasts. That of Tabernacles was very popular, and his desire to learn, the ardent interest which he felt in the "things of his Father," the memory which he kept of his first visit to Jerusalem, his first sight of the Temple, — all lead me to believe that his steps were often turned toward the holy city; for it is difficult to believe that after returning to Nazareth, at twelve years of age, he never again left it. But his absences were never long; he never made distant journeys, and Nazareth was certainly his constant place of abode. For thirty years he had before his eyes the meagre and narrow horizon of his own village. For thirty years he lived amid its cottages, threshing-floors, wine-presses. For thirty years he looked upon those mountains whose most minute outlines had been familiar to him from his tenderest infancy. The features of this landscape were graven on his memory in lines never to be effaced. Here, among these shrubs and roses, he had

received his first impression of the world, and felt his soul awake to a sympathy with nature which had been always growing stronger. In the brilliancy of the red anemones, which he called lilies, he had seen the resplendent glory of his Father; and upon these silent hills he had felt his presence and had passed long nights in prayer.

Among acts preparatory to his public life we must include prayer, the hours spent with his Father. He knew how to "close his door" and "pray to the Father who seeth in secret;" but it was especially upon the heights which encircle the village that he found solitude and isolation. There is, perhaps, not one of the hills near Nazareth upon which he has not prayed. We have already remarked that if during his ministry he loved to withdraw to the mountain and pass sometimes the whole night there alone with the Father, he certainly did it, and often, during the long and fruitful years of his preparation.

There is one of the heights overlooking the village which must often have attracted him.[1] From hence is seen one of the finest

[1] Now Jebel-es-Sikh, 542 metres in height. Nazareth itself is 273 metres above the sea, and 100 metres

views in all Palestine, and it is beyond all doubt that Jesus often looked upon it. This height is at the north; it is the most elevated of the immediate environs of Nazareth. At Nazareth the view is very much shut in; but here, on the contrary, the panorama is immense. At the south are the mountains of Samaria, beyond which may be pictured the dark and unattractive Judea. On the west lies the Carmel range, the double peak dominating Megiddo, and in the distance, stretching out to infinity, the blue waters of the Mediterranean. At the northward may be seen the mountains of Jafed, melting away into the sea; and in the farthest distance the snow peak of great Hermon. Then, turning to the east, the eye is fixed by the rounded and graceful forms of the mountains of the land of Shechem and Mount Tabor.

Such was the view which Jesus looked upon. From that hill, on the side toward the sunrise, after a night of deep thought and prayer, he would catch a glimpse of the Jordan valley, which was later to

above the plain of Esdraelon. At the summit of Jebel-es-Sikh is found the little Waly of Nebi Ishmael.

be the scene of his activity, and beyond the river, Perea with its high plains; while all around him, at his very feet, was spread a prodigious wealth of rich vegetation, and lands of such fertility that they were compared with Paradise.

In this nature Jesus unceasingly saw the face of his Father. He had known this Father, and loved him with all his heart, all his soul, all his strength, and all his thought, from the day when his pious mother taught him to lisp his name; and after having found his Fatherhood in the Old Testament, in the marvellous story of the deliverances of his people, he found it again on the solitary heights which overlook Nazareth.

Descending from the hill, he found it again, everywhere and always, in that nature which encompassed him. It reflected the invisible world; it was as if transparent, and the serene and benevolent face of the Father appeared to him through all things. The labors of the country, the habits of animals, the slow development of plants, the arduous task of shepherds and laborers, — everything interested and attracted him, everything served as mate-

rial for instruction, everything was to him a proof of the incessant activity of the heavenly Father and his infinite love. There was in it, to him, a perpetual revelation, which preserved him from the hard and dry Rabbinism of his contemporaries. He collected facts, accumulated experiences, of which he was later to open the inexhaustible treasure to those whom he would teach.

Finally, in his hours of solitude, the question of his destiny formulated itself: Why am I in the world? What is my mission? What is to be my life? He asked his Father; he occupied himself with the things that concerned Him. The Synagogue had revealed to him the existence of a multitude of religious questions, and had not answered one of them. He had read the Prophets, and the mission of his people had been revealed to him. But one question included all the others, and forced itself upon him: Who would be the Messiah? When would he appear? What work would he accomplish? Thus passed eighteen years, and he arrived slowly, but surely, at the unalterable conviction, "The Messiah! I myself am he!"

V

STUDIES AND READING

CHAPTER V

STUDIES AND READING

READING was certainly one of the principal sources of Jesus' education. It is not difficult to divine what books he knew and pondered. First of all must be named the Old Testament. The one which he read was less complete than our own. It consisted of two volumes. The first, called "The Law," included the five books attributed to Moses. They had a more particularly sacred character than all the others; and every one believed, as we have already had occasion to say, that God himself had dictated their contents to the Hebrew Lawgiver, word by word. The second volume, called "The Prophets," contained the following books, in the order given: Part First, — Joshua, Judges, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings. Part Second, — Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah,

Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

The other books which we find in our Old Testament to-day were not yet gathered into a sacred collection. They were none the less considered as having come from God; for every writing bearing the name of one of the great men of the past was held to be divine. Jesus certainly never had the modern notion of a closed, definitively fixed canon. He read the Book of Daniel with the same veneration as those of Isaiah and Jeremiah, and yet this book was not in the collection which included the writings of Isaiah and Jeremiah. But Daniel had been one of the most remarkable seers of the Exile, and his book contained revelations of capital importance.

The same was the case with the Psalms. In the time of Jesus these were simply the Hymn Book of the Synagogue; but this collection of sacred songs was considered by the whole people as divine; it was sometimes named in connection with the Law and the Prophets; men added "and the Psalms."[1] On the other hand, there are certain books like Ezra, Nehemiah,

[1] Luke xxiv. 44.

Esther, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Songs, which Jesus never quoted; and there are some among the number of whose existence he was probably always unaware.

The first book which he knew was certainly the Law, because this was the work most respected by the people, and because he heard it read in the Synagogue every Sabbath day. For that matter, the Synagogue was, without any doubt, his first religious school and his first inspiring influence. He had early begun to attend it with all his veneration and childish piety. He continued, as a young man, to be present at its services; and never, during his whole life, did he fail to take part in the Synagogue worship.[1] The sermons which he heard there every week — for regular sermons were preached there — aroused him to thought, provoked him to reflection. It would happen that these sermons, which were explanations of the text, were contradictory; and Jesus would assimilate one thing, reject another, ask himself how he himself would have explained such a passage; above all things recoiling from the scholasticism which was the canker of Judaism in his time.

[1] "As his custom was." Luke iv. 16.

The Synagogue of Nazareth, where he was one day to read a fragment from Isaiah,[1] was a very large rectangular building. In the interior there were four columns on each side; at the end an elevated semicircular rostrum, upon which were seated the readers and the Scribes.[2] A great chest contained the sacred manuscripts, and in front of it was a small pulpit. The hall was furnished with benches, the seats in the first rows and on the platform being paid for. These were the seats of the wealthy. Joseph and his sons would have places on one side of the hall, in the free seats; Mary and her daughters on the other side, — for the sexes were always separated. The women were veiled, and the men kept on their turbans.

When the sermon began, a person who had been selected beforehand mounted the platform and recited the *Shema* and the *Shemone Esre;*[3] the congregation, standing, responded with a loud *Amen* at the

[1] Luke iv. 17.

[2] These were the architectural features of all synagogues, and consequently of the synagogue of Nazareth.

[3] For the *Shemone Esre* see my work "Palestine in the Time of Jesus Christ," 5th ed., p. 375 ff.

close of each prayer. No doubt Jesus had more than once been called to repeat these two prayers.

After this the Law was read; that is to say, about fifty verses of the Pentateuch. The Chazzan, a sort of sacristan, had taken from the chest the case containing the sacred texts; and seven men read, by turn, three or four verses apiece, in monotonous and nasal tones. Every three years the entire Pentateuch was thus read through. Between his twelfth and thirtieth years Jesus must have heard it read six times in the Synagogue of Nazareth. Each verse was read in Hebrew, the original language, and immediately translated into Syriac; for the people of Nazareth did not understand Hebrew.

In his childhood Jesus understood it no more than the others, and he was obliged to learn it when he undertook to make a private study of the text. It is probable that he never spoke it fluently, for not one of those utterances of his which the Gospels have preserved in their original text is in Hebrew. They were all uttered in Syriac, his mother tongue; he never used any other in conversation, and even

when he quoted from the Old Testament, he quoted it only as translated into Syriac.

When the reading was finished, one of the readers made an oral comment, an exposition, or a sort of homily. As a child Jesus long accepted as a matter of authority, with no thought of questioning them, these interpretations, of which the Talmudic commentaries may give us an idea. Most generally they were trivial and unintelligent remarks, forced reconciliations, puerile observations.

This commentary finished, the individual who had recited the opening prayers read a passage from the Book of the Prophets. Every three verses were translated by an interpreter; finally, the benediction was pronounced, and the assembly dispersed. These various readings and recitations were alternated with the singing of Psalms, and three deacons gathered the gifts of the worshippers for the poor.

One of the first steps in the self-education of Jesus was certainly to borrow, during week days, the roll of the Torah, in order to read over again the passage commented upon the previous Sabbath. Thus he became thoroughly acquainted

with the history of his people, and the stories in the Mosaic books became very familiar to him, — the Creation, the Fall, Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, all the patriarchs, Moses and his mighty deeds; then, in the collection of the Prophets, David, Solomon, Elijah, Elisha were his favorite heroes.

He had his favorites among the writing prophets. He seems not to have enjoyed them equally. Isaiah appears to have been the author of his choice, and perhaps the Psalms alone were more familiar to him than this prophecy. It is probable that he succeeded in procuring copies of the Scriptures for himself, which he would not need to return to the Synagogue after having become acquainted with them; for the very poorest, if they were pious, procured for themselves sheets of parchment, upon which they copied, or caused to be copied by some obliging Scribe, the texts which they most cared to read often. The handwriting of these manuscripts which Jesus read, after having had them copied or copying them himself, was precisely that of our Hebrew Bibles to-day.

The Law was to him the Word of God;

neither more nor less. In his eyes this word was the ground of authority. He never put a single critical question with regard to it. For him, everything that was written was entirely authentic and veracious. It all came from God; it was all true. The formula "It is written" was for him the synonym for "God said." And yet he felt that in very many respects this Word was surpassed in his own case by his conscience, by an unerring, secret, and immediate intuition of truth which he bore within him. He presented this unique phenomenon, that he was at the same time obedient to the Word of God and superior to it. Take, for example, a passage from his Sermon on the Mount: "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill, and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say unto you that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment."[1] He accepted, therefore, the commandment "Thou shalt not kill;" he did not reject it, but he explained it, and showed that it implies hatred and wrath; he rose from the act to the sentiment which dic-

[1] Matt. v. 21, 22.

tates it. This exegesis appeared to him legitimate. He affirmed that his way of seeing is the true interpretation of the text, and at the same time it was he who spoke, and he knew it well; for he thus speaks: "But *I* say unto you, — *I*."

If, now, we study this interpretation given by Jesus, in itself, we see that it separates that in the Law which is eternal from that which is temporary; and we shall show, later, that in this he was only applying a method which was always his, a method which he always made use of in all circumstances, — "Abolish nothing; fulfil everything."

We have said that it was especially Isaiah and the Psalms which inspired him. It was in them, indeed, that he found universality, that he learned that all men are brothers, that God is the father of all men; that he discovered that worship which is of no time nor fatherland, — worship in spirit and in truth, independent of rites and formulas, which he was ever afterward to preach. The Books of Jeremiah and Hosea also made a part of his favorite reading. He loved to repeat sentences drawn from one or another of these

prophets; for example, this: "I desire mercy and not sacrifice."[1]

The prophets also spoke to him of a restoration in the future, a glorious era soon to come, a final redemption which would be the triumph of Jehovah; and his faith in himself and in an exceptional mission awakened and grew strong, comparing these visions with the wretchedness which surrounded him, this future happiness with the woes of his time and people, and feeling within himself the growth of a religious and moral strength which surpassed that of the best among his contemporaries.

Desirous of studying more closely the Messianic hopes of his time, he had recourse to those who had specially treated the subject; in particular two Apocalypses much valued by his contemporaries, — the Book of Daniel and that of Enoch.

He was led to study them by the religious and political condition of his nation. Continual seditions agitated the people, and kept alive the hope of a speedy deliverance. Of this profoundly disturbed situation Nazareth certainly felt the reflex influence. Men must have talked politics in the small

[1] Hosea vi. 6.

village square on Sabbath days on coming out of the Synagogue; they must have eagerly questioned every one who had come from Jerusalem during the week, asking them, "What news is there? Has any zealot risen? Has the Procurator committed any new crime?" One day some one told Jesus that Archelaus had been deposed by the Romans, and that they had reduced Judea to the rank of a province; another day he learned from the lips of some ardent patriot of the uprising of Judas the Gaulonite. He had revolted and refused to pay the tax. Ought one to pay it? Yes, or no. Some said we ought not, for God alone is our Master, and to pay it is to consent to servitude and recognize the power of the Romans. But Judas, said others, was put down by the Procurator Coponius; ought they not to see in his defeat the finger of God, who wills that we should render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's? Jesus listened to all these impassioned discussions. He learned that the death of agitators was certain, but he also learned that such a death was sought after by them as a triumph, and that enthusiasts made it their

glory to have no care for life, provided they could defend to the last the sacred cause, — the cause of God.

In the last analysis all minds were agitated with the Messianic hope. In every line of the Old Testament they saw the announcement of the future kingdom; they calculated the period of the Messiah's coming; and their calculations brought them precisely to the troubled time in which they were living. The Messiah is about to appear! was the universal cry.

We can understand, therefore, that Jesus would wish to be familiar with the Books of Daniel and Enoch. Daniel was the work of all others most widely read and venerated by Jews of the first century.[1] This book impressed him strongly. It summed up the opinions of the best theologians of the preceding centuries. It gave a true philosophy of history, and, subordinating everything to the Jewish people, saw in the succession of empires only the accomplishment of the will of God with regard to his chosen people.

In the Book of Daniel Jesus read for the first time the name "Son of man," by

[1] Josephus, *Ant.* x. 10, 17.

which he at a later time chose to designate himself. He found there, also, the prediction of the universal empire of the righteous, and the clear and positive affirmation of the resurrection from the dead.

The Book of Enoch, in its turn, made these predictions more definite. Jesus did not read it in the form in which we possess it, for this book is composed of fragments, and more than one of them is later than Jesus Christ. But it is easy to distinguish these; and the Palestinian origin of many passages certainly anterior to Christianity is to-day beyond all dispute.

Jesus read those passages which are apparently of Essenian origin. The author expects a last assault of Gentile — that is, Syrian — power. This assault, repulsed by God, will be followed by a judgment. The fallen angels and faithless Jews will be cast into the pit. A new Jerusalem will be built by God, and pious Israelites will there receive the homage of the Gentiles. Then will appear the Messiah. He is represented under the image of a white bull. All the Gentiles will pray to him, and will be converted to the true God.

To the reading of these books Jesus per-

haps added that of the Psalms of Solomon, — a collection composed about sixty-three years before his birth. In it he found the announcement of the kingdom of God, and the perpetuity of this kingdom in the house of David. A king descended from David should be raised up by God to destroy the enemies of Israel and drive out the Gentiles from Jerusalem. This king would be righteous; he would be the Anointed of the Lord, full of the Spirit of God, and pure from all sin.

Did Jesus know any other works, lost to us, of the very existence of which we are ignorant, which spoke of the glorious things which the Jewish people would perform, and of the eternal kingdom which God would set up in a near future? It is lawful to suppose so; for if any one was eager to become acquainted with all predictions and search out their meaning, if any one was able to draw from them the fragments of truth which they contained, it assuredly must have been Jesus.

Still we cannot but notice how remote from his thought was all the strange, fantastic, exaggerated side of these apocalyptic visions. What a distance between his sim-

ple, popular teachings, figurative no doubt, but with figures always quiet and coherent, and the books of his people, with their tissues of false and fantastical symbolism!

In these books everything is allegorical; and, indeed, in the time of Jesus allegory was used by everybody in all cases. But there is not a trace of this sort of metaphor in his own teachings, and it is certain that he alone of all his people was distinctly repelled by this pretentious allegorism. In the matter of allegory he had only parables, — a sort of comparison, of which one of the greatest merits is that it is marvellously natural and simple, while in the Book of Enoch, for example, all is strange, exaggerated, complicated. The advent of the Messiah is there predicted, with all the tremendous and terrifying events which are to come with him. Cataclysms succeed one another, each more extraordinary than the preceding; but Jesus, who was familiar with these high-flown descriptions, remained always independent of them.

His exegesis of the Old Testament itself has a sobriety and discernment which singularly cut loose from the exegesis of his time. The Doctors and Scribes excelled

at finding in the Scriptures what was not there. The Law was for them the object of the most subtle interpretations. In the Prophets and the Psalms they discovered a great number of characteristics referable to the Messiah, and claimed that they recognized him in all parts of the Scriptures. Now, it does not appear that Jesus was ever led astray by these so-called discoveries. Upon this point he distinctly separated himself from those who had been his guides.

Without reserve he admired the sublime poetry of the Psalms and the magnificent disclosures of Isaiah. These books, and others like them, were the principal aliment of his piety, and his support day by day. Isaiah was one of his masters; but nothing indicates that he found in his writings anything which was not there, or that he accepted the subtle explanations and forced exegesis of his contemporaries. Nothing indicates that Jesus ever understood the Scriptures otherwise than in their veritable sense, recognizing the Messiah where he is clearly announced, and refusing to discover him where he certainly is not to be found.

VI

JESUS AND THE PHARISEES

CHAPTER VI

JESUS AND THE PHARISEES

IT is generally admitted that among the Jews in the time of Jesus Christ there were three sects, — the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes. But when Josephus makes this statement, he completely misrepresents Palestinian Judaism in the first century. Of these three categories of religionists, certain Essenes of strict observance were the only sectaries. It may be said that the Sadducees also formed a party, but it was of very trifling moment. The priests of Jerusalem, the pontiffs in the Temple, alone preferred Sadduceeism. They were only a small, uninfluential group, confined to the sanctuary.

As to the Pharisees, far from being sectaries, they were the nation itself. They represented the general condition of religious minds in Palestine in the first century. Every pious Jew was, if one may

use the expression, modelled after the Pharisees. The Pharisees had taken possession of the synagogues. They directed the teachings there given; and hence whoever among the Jews was seriously concerned with religion, whoever had any piety, was of the number of the Pharisees. It may be said, in consequence, that Jesus also, in his youth, was under Pharisaic influence.

The opposition which is always assumed between Pharisaism and Christianity rests in part upon the celebrated invective, eight times repeated, "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites," etc.[1] But Jesus said these words exactly as a preacher of our days might say from his pulpit, "Woe unto you, proud and hypocritical Christians, who make a point of attending the services of the Church, and yet are formalists, not practising during the week what you hear on Sunday!" No doubt modern preachers are in the habit of expressing themselves in more moderate terms; but, the form apart, they continually say similar things to their hearers. Who would conclude from this that all Chris-

[1] Matt. xxiii.

tians are of this sort; that the preacher who thus speaks is their adversary, and that they are his irreconcilable enemies? No one. Yet from the invectives of Jesus men have concluded that all Pharisees were hypocrites; and the word "Pharisee" has become a synonym for the word "Jesuit." Many are the historical errors, received as indisputable truths, which rest upon misunderstandings of this sort.

Let me attempt to show the true character of Pharisaism in the time of Jesus Christ.

The Pharisees and the Essenes — of whom we shall speak in the next chapter — represented two sides of the same tendency which Jesus thoroughly knew, toward which he felt himself in many respects drawn, and from which he borrowed not a little. Far from considering Pharisaism, as a whole, dangerous, and all Pharisees enemies, he had a number of them among his friends; he often ate with them, and at a later day his Church was very largely recruited from among the Pharisees.

The Talmud distinguishes several classes of Pharisees, and only one among the seven which it mentions was the object of the merited reprobation of Jesus.

The work of the Pharisees, as a whole, and apart from a few regrettable exceptions, consisted in spiritualizing Judaism by detaching it from the Temple, the sacrifices, and the whole sacerdotal ritual. This part of the Jewish religion was in the hands of the Sadducees, — rich aristocrats who lived in the Temple and by the Temple, and, so to speak, never left the Temple; whose influence over the people was naught, and who were to be found only at Jerusalem. With the Sadducees the rite alone was of importance. They were the incarnation of the narrowest formalism, and concerned themselves not at all with ideas and beliefs. Jesus never felt anything but aversion, and even a profound and legitimate repugnance for Sadduceeism. The Sadducees returned it to him with interest, and at bottom they were his only real enemies. It was these formalists without piety, these aristocrats without either faith or good faith, who condemned him to death. Jesus never opposed them in words. He imitated the Pharisees, their ancient political foes, who in the first century had long stood aloof from them; they thinking, not without

reason, that these sceptics, who had the habits without the convictions of religion, were at once despicable, and without danger to true Judaism.

Furthermore, during his entire youth Jesus knew nothing about the Sadducees. His visits to Jerusalem were too infrequent and too brief for it to be possible for him to come into relations with them.

The Pharisees, as we have said, were masters of the synagogues. There they spiritualized Judaism, a work of which Jesus certainly approved; and when the latter said, with Hosea, in the name of Jehovah, "I desire mercy, and not sacrifice," he adopted one of their favorite maxims. During the early part of his ministry Jesus had intimate and frequent relations with this class of Pharisees, who were not, I admit, the entire body, but who, I believe, formed the great majority of it. Very few of them, it is true, had the courage to approve him openly; but more than one of them had secret relations with him. One came to him by night;[1] another warned him that Herod desired to kill him;[2] some of them

[1] John iii. 1. [2] Luke xiii. 31.

were not afraid to invite him to their houses, and receive him at their tables.[1]

The day was to come, however, when there would be a rupture between Jesus and the Pharisees. This day would be one of the most solemn of his life. We shall speak of it in detail when we study the ministry of Jesus Christ. The Pharisees would at length go so far as to concert together to compass the destruction of Jesus. If some among them remained true to him, they hid themselves, and not one of them dared to undertake his defence at the time of his trial. It is even very possible that in the Sanhedrin which condemned Jesus there were a few Pharisees, although the majority were evidently Sadducees.

If the Pharisees, as a whole, were the moderate party, much beloved by the people, resisting the corruption and impiety of the Sadducees; if Jesus was one day to counsel men to do all that they said, — "The Scribes and Pharisees sit on Moses' seat: all things, therefore, whatsoever they say unto you, these do and observe,"[2] —

[1] Luke xi. 37.
[2] Matt. xxiii. 2.

he would nevertheless add that they acted otherwise than they taught, "They say and do not," and he was the irreconcilable adversary of that which is to-day called Pharisaism.

From all these facts I think we may conclude that during the years which preceded his public life Jesus studied the Pharisaic doctrines closely and with much sympathy, and that, far from having been from the first the adversary of the Pharisees, he began by being their friend. He heard them preach the love of God and of one's neighbor, deprecate bloody sacrifices, proclaim the imperious duty of obedience to the Law in order to be perfect in this world and to receive the reward of the kingdom of heaven. How should he not have approved of them, — he who was to give precisely this teaching in the earlier days of his ministry?

It must not be forgotten that the Pharisaic doctors had gained much in spirituality during the time immediately preceding the Christian era. Hillel had undertaken to defend the moral law against the corruption of the times, to replace the Temple worship with a more spiritual adoration,

and to sum up the whole Law in the love of God and one's neighbor. It was a Pharisee who declared that to love one's neighbor as oneself was "more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices."[1] Jesus would one day blame the hypocritical Pharisees; but the other Pharisees also blamed them. Although many did, in fact, make an external devotion a means of influence over the people, the Talmud condemned this: it rejected the "painted" Pharisees, as it called them, — the double-faced men who affected to be true Pharisees and were not.

It may even be affirmed not only that Jesus associated with Pharisees before his ministry, but that in a sense he was one of them. In fact, the Pharisaism of the time was, as we have shown, the true Judaism, the authentic and loyal Judaism. And Jesus was a Jew by birth, by belief, by innermost conviction, by all that he had received in the strictly orthodox surroundings in which he had grown up. And what did he at first purpose to do? He purposed, with the best among the Pharisees, to spiritualize the old Mosaism,

[1] Mark xii. 33.

to fulfil it, by bringing it out from the narrow rut in which the Sadducees were stifling it. Therefore we see him immediately adopt, and all his life preach, the fundamental belief of the Pharisees, namely, the resurrection of the body. It was one of their essential dogmas, and in affirming it the Doctors of the second Temple had made an important innovation, for which it is difficult to find justification in the written Law. Jesus did as they did; and so certain is it that he held this doctrine from the Pharisees, that we find him making use of the arguments of the Pharisees to justify himself,[1] citing the Torah as they did, and replying to the Sadducees as the Pharisees might have done.

1308 5

What, then, was definitely the attitude of Jesus in face of Pharisaism? Was he a Pharisee in youth, only to abandon the party at a later day? Certainly not. We have just shown in what sense it may be said that Jesus was a Pharisee; but he never belonged to any party, to any school; he never gave up his independence, and never accepted the party cry of any one.

[1] Matt. xxii. 23 ff.

He was amenable only to his Father and himself.

Not that he isolated himself, and would learn nothing that his contemporaries might have been able to teach him. All that we have hitherto said tends to prove the contrary. If Jesus belonged to no party, no party was a stranger to him. He knew, studied, understood them all. Let us rather say he had assimilated them all, with a penetration whose power and depth cannot be too much admired; and with regard to each of them he fulfilled all and destroyed nothing.

The day would come when he would use this expression to characterize his attitude toward the Law. It may be applied to his attitude toward all parties and all doctrines of his time. Still more, the word is one which reveals that which was the constant method of Jesus. And yet the term "method" is not exact, for it supposes a predetermined system consciously applied to men and things; while with Jesus it was the very essence of what for want of a better term we will dare to call his genius. Everywhere and in all things, whether with regard to the Old Testament, to

Moses and the prophets, with regard to the religious parties which surrounded him, Pharisees or Essenes, or with regard simply to such a detail as the adoption of the term "Son of man" or the rule for the observance of the Sabbath, or with regard to what was to be understood by the Kingdom of God, the advent of the Messiah, the Judgment, the age to come, he accepted, comprehended, penetrated, assimilated them all, and at the same time transformed, renewed, regenerated, created them all anew. He made the partition between that which passes away and that which remains, that which is perishable and that which is eternal; he preserved the seed and let fall the husk.

Jesus therefore kept a complete independence with regard to all the parties of his time. Never, in any place, do we see him enrolling himself under any banner whatsoever; and it was certainly thus during that long portion of his life which is not known to us. Scrupulous observer of the beliefs of his people and their religious traditions, conservator of the past, he transformed and spiritualized it, while before all else remaining himself. It is therefore

not exact to say that he was subject to the influence of the religious parties of his time, for he was subject to nothing, and he never accepted any doctrine ready made. He was often in sympathy with the ideas that surrounded him, but he never permitted himself to be led away by them. His sympathy helped him to understand them, but it never blinded him. He examined, he judged all these ideas, and either rejected or adopted them. Neither conservative nor revolutionary, he yet was both, bringing about the greatest revolution of history while conserving the past, but making it entirely new.

Such, then, was the unique feature which made the invariable character of the line of conduct followed by Jesus with regard to every idea, principle, belief, institution which presented itself to him for examination. He retained its permanent element, and rejected the element that was transitory. He tore off the envelope and kept the contents. With sure and swift glance he distinguished that which is eternal from that which is transitory, taking no notice of the latter, and proclaiming the absolute value of the

former. I repeat: whether the subject were the Law, the Temple, the sacrifices, the prophets, the Pharisees, the Essenes, always, everywhere, without a single variation, thus he acted.

VII

JESUS AND THE ESSENES

CHAPTER VII

JESUS AND THE ESSENES

AFTER Pharisaism comes Essenism. Jesus could not have done other than study these strange sectaries, and in many respects he must have felt himself drawn toward them. No doubt he asked himself if there was not something here, — a suggestive line of conduct, an initiation to receive, in view of his coming work. Among the Essenes, side by side with impossible caprices and veritable extravagances, there was an elevation, a moral grandeur, which could not fail to impress Jesus.

He has been pictured as leaving Nazareth and going to study the Essenian practices in the convents of the oasis of Engedi. We shall be on our guard against these descriptions, in which there is more imagination than reality. But one fact remains:

Jesus knew the Essenes well, and practised Essenism to a great degree.

Let us transport ourselves to the first century. Let us walk along the shores of the Lake of Tiberias and through the villages of Galilee. We shall meet men in white garments, whose life is pure and who are much loved by the people. They are believed to have the gift of prophecy and of miracles, and every one attaches great importance to their words and actions. They enjoy an authority which the Scribes never succeed in gaining.

They systematically abstain from politics, and carefully separate that which belongs to Cæsar from that which belongs to God. They love solitude and prayer, but at the same time are active and zealous. Their preferences lead them among the poor and the sick. Of the greatest sobriety, they partake of only a single dish at a meal. It is their custom to go from place to place, surrounded by disciples, and one member of the little group carries the common purse. For that matter, they live only on what is given to them, and being little concerned with the material details of life, they feel no anxiety for the mor-

row. They carry with them neither gold nor silver, neither wallet nor provisions, nor a change of garments. They count upon finding brethren in the houses which they may enter, to supply them with whatever they may need, and they perceive by the manner in which their salutation of peace is received, whether the house they have entered is or is not occupied by friends.

Many of them renounce marriage, the better to consecrate their lives to their work; but marriage is by no means forbidden them. Models of virtue, of probity, of disinterestedness, they disapprove of slavery, they never take oath, and forbid their disciples to do so, confining themselves to saying yea, yea, or nay, nay; and their word is more respected than the oaths of other men. Finally, they celebrate in common a religious meal of a sacred character.

Many Essenes occupy themselves in preaching and healing diseases. They also baptize and permit their disciples to baptize. A certain number perform miracles, and they acquire a great reputation by their supernatural cures. They apply

themselves more particularly to casting out demons, and they are held to be most successful in the practice of exorcism.

One of their fundamental beliefs is the near appearance of the kingdom of God, and they make this announcement the foundation of their preaching. They call it the kingdom of heaven (*Malchuth-hash-shamayim*). They say that men must prepare themselves for this event, and that Judaism is on the verge of a terrible crisis, after which will come the times of the Messiah. To hasten the arrival of this blessed time men should sell their goods and give the money to the poor. They themselves have put in practice this precept; they have sold their goods, which were unrighteous riches; and they have this advantage over the Pharisees that what they say they do, while the Pharisees say and do not: therefore the Essenes accuse the latter of being hypocrites.

To recall these details is to show at once that which nascent Christianity had in common with Essenism; and to say that Jesus did not practise Essenism, especially in the beginning of his ministry, and when he was in relations with John the Baptist,

whose words and mode of life offered many points of resemblance to those of the Essenes, is to deny the very evidence.

But it would be a grave mistake to undertake to explain Jesus by saying he was an Essene; for he no more belonged to this party than to any other. He was always at an incomparable height above Essenism, and he treated it as he treated Pharisaism, with entire liberty and complete detachment. If he adopted certain of their customs and even of their ideas, which is undeniable, he separated himself squarely from them upon that which was the very foundation of their purpose.

The customs of Essenism were his own customs, and he could not do otherwise than love the virtues, the morality, the disinterestedness of the Essenes; but those whom he resembled in outward practice, those who went here and there, preaching the kingdom of God and surrounding themselves with disciples, held doctrines against which Jesus constantly protested. Their incessant concern was to avoid by exterior purifications the uncleannesses forbidden by Moses, and to practise Levitical purity in all its austere rigor. Hence their

bathings, their ablutions, their baptisms, which Jesus did not immediately reject, perhaps, but which he early repudiated.

The fourth gospel tells us this in a passage which is certainly historic, and to which we shall return in speaking of John the Baptist. Jesus at first baptized, it says;[1] then he himself left off, but permitted the disciples to baptize.[2] But it is probable that he did not long permit them to do it. All that took place at the beginning, when his ministry and that of John the Baptist were still mingled with one another. But discussions about baptism arose, of which the Evangelist John has preserved the echo;[3] and then Jesus entirely and completely separated himself from these practices.

Besides, true Essenes, consistent Essenes, those who were convinced of the impossibility of subjecting themselves to all the exigencies of the Law, did not remain in the world. They retired into monasteries built on the west of the Red Sea. In the oasis of Engedi they lived

[1] John iii. 22.
[2] John iv. 1, 2.
[3] John iii. 25 ff.

upon dates, a pure aliment, and plunged into pure water several times a day. Poor dreamers, given to mystical and esoteric speculations, they avoided the stains of the body, and believed that thus they avoided those of the soul. They were never more severely condemned than by Jesus, who cried, "Not that which goeth into a man can defile a man, but that which cometh out of a man."[1] Jesus certainly adopted nothing but their outward customs; in all other respects he always stood aloof from them.

With regard to Essenism, his conduct was the same that it was in regard to all other things, — destroying in order to fulfil. During his ministry he retained only a superficial resemblance to the Essenes. Here again, here more than elsewhere, he kept only that which abides, and energetically cast away all that is perishable and outworn. He kept of Essenism only the moral life which animated it, and let fall the coarse husk which enveloped its idea and kept it imprisoned in the narrowest and most superannuated legalism.

[1] Mark vii. 14, 15. The entire chapter is the condemnation of Essenism.

Furthermore, other thoughts occupied him. The Essenes preached the kingdom of God and announced the Messianic times, but they never spoke of the person of the Messiah. With Jesus this was the matter of supreme interest. The Messiah was about to appear! Who could he be?

Was it, then, in one of his hours of retreat upon the Jebel-es-Sikh, that for the first time the sublime thought came to him, "What if I were the Messiah! What if *I* should accomplish the expected work! What if I were the One sent by the Father! Oh, to overthrow Satan's throne, — to vanquish sin, sorrow, and death!" Was not that a call which he heard? Was it the divine call? Perhaps. Was the hour marked by the Father about to strike, and to strike for him?

Yet a little while and he was to make the acquaintance of the extraordinary man under whose influence he would pronounce the definitive Yes. John the Baptist was to have the signal honor, the imperishable glory, of revealing Jesus to himself, of helping him to hear God, of forcing upon him the conviction: "I am the Messiah, and the hour for action has come." The

Father's hour was to strike at the never to be forgotten moment of his baptism. John the Baptist was on the banks of the Jordan; he was moving the people; he was about to move the very soul of Jesus.

VIII

JESUS AND JOHN THE BAPTIST

CHAPTER VIII

JESUS AND JOHN THE BAPTIST

THE only lasting influence which was exerted upon Jesus was that of John the Baptist. Certainly he also was to be surpassed some day; but just here, above all things, in separating himself from John, Jesus kept the best that the latter had given him; and through his whole life he retained a remembrance of John full of gratitude and admiration. Behind Luther was Staupitz; and there are few men who have exerted a great influence who have not had their precursors.

As Jesus drew near to his thirtieth year, he heard about this young and pious ascetic, full of ardor, who was called John the Baptist, and whose moral and religious influence had in a short time become remarkable. Jesus immediately had a very clear intuition that he had much to learn

from this man, and, quitting Nazareth with a few disciples, his relatives or his friends, he set out to see and hear him.

John — or, more correctly, Johanan — was on the banks of the Jordan, at the boundary of the wilderness of Judea as one comes from Galilee, in a sequestered valley, covered with a vigorous vegetation, in the midst of tamarisks and willows. He was preaching there, in words of a rough and aggressive eloquence which exerted a strange influence. People came in crowds to hear him.

At first Jesus mingled with the crowd and listened like the others. He heard John pronounce long discourses, impassioned and fiery, the principal theme being the oft repeated words, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"[1] No miracle accompanied these words. John did no miracles, and made no pretension of doing any. It is not said that sick people were brought to him or that he busied himself with healing. He was concerned only with a moral regeneration. Nevertheless, he performed one religious act, though only one, — baptism. Those among

[1] Matt. iii. 2, and parallel passages.

his auditors who desired moral regeneration and confessed their sins were led by him to the river Jordan. There he baptized them; that is to say, he effected a complete immersion of their whole body in the water. It was his only rite.

This baptism was not a mere sign, designed to make an impression on the multitude, but also a preparation and consecration for the kingdom of God, which was imminent. It created a bond between all John's disciples. It testified to the renunciation of the former life, entrance into a new life, and, above all, the ardor of the Messianic hope. John was convinced that the hour of Jehovah was about to strike.

John was a Universalist. While continuing to be a Jew, he foresaw and preached a reaction against the narrowness of certain Pharisees. He said, "God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham,"[1] which was the same as saying that one could be the son of Abraham without descending from Abraham.

All this Jesus saw and heard. The impression that he received from it was

[1] Luke iii. 8.

very profound. That which first struck him was that John was not an ordinary anchorite. For he was not concerned with his own sanctification, but solely with the sins of his nation. Next he was impressed by the conviction with which the soul of John was filled, that he had a mission to accomplish, that he held it from God alone, and that only he could do it. Jesus was not long in arriving at the certainty that the prediction of the second coming of Elias made by the Scribes had received its accomplishment in the person of John the Baptist. "This is he," he said, "who is Elias that was to come."[1] Upon this important point he never wavered; to the end of his life he was persuaded that John had been the personification of Elias. This is the more remarkable since John himself refused to be taken for Elias, and declared that he was not Elias.[2] We do not know whether or not Jesus was aware of this denial by John the Baptist. In any case, he retained his opinion.

Very soon he felt himself entirely won over; everything in the person and work

[1] Matt. xi. 14, and parallel passages.
[2] John i. 21.

of this remarkable man inspired him with confidence. From the place of hearer he passed into that of friend. He entered into relations with John, and their association at once became very close and very affectionate. Jesus loved his substitution of a private rite for legal ceremonial; he loved his preaching, which harmonized so well with all that he himself experienced.

John spoke against rich priests, against prevaricating Pharisees, against formalist Doctors of the Law, — against the whole official community, asleep in a false and delusive security. He expressed with unequalled boldness and courage that which Jesus had long been thinking.

Jesus found in John's utterances all that was best in Essenian doctrine, and he found in them nothing of that which had displeased him in that doctrine. John the Baptist had certainly known and studied Essenism; he borrowed much from it, even going so far as to advocate a sort of community of goods;[1] but he had never desired to be of their number. He was too independent and too original to affiliate himself with a sect and an estab-

[1] Luke iii. 10, 11.

lished order. He indignantly repelled the formalism and legalism of the Essenes. In his view, baptism was to be administered only once, — "one baptism;" this also became the Christian doctrine.[1]

Jesus loved and admired this free Essene, detaching himself from cloistered Essenism, issuing from his retreat out of the fulness of his compassion for perishing souls, and uttering his magnificent cry of alarm and hope!

Listening to John the Baptist, Jesus took lessons in preaching and in popular oratory; his ideas about the kingdom of God and the good news to come began to ripen. Everything here was instructive and suggestive; we can understand the great emotion which took possession of him, and how he was impelled to say, "This is Elias that was to come."

At last Jesus took the decisive step. He asked for and received baptism. He was urged to this by divers motives, easy

[1] Eph. iv. 5. Nevertheless, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, "baptisms" are spoken of in the plural (vi. 2), and the author appears to consider it quite as important for those who would approach God to have the body washed in pure water as to have the heart and conscience purified from all evil (x. 22).

to understand. In the first place, he desired to show his entire adherence to John's work. More than this, he desired to take his place also among the insignificant and humble ones who were breaking with the past, declaring that the time was fulfilled, and a new era about to begin. And finally, Jesus had decided to preach like John, to leave Nazareth and go up and down the country, saying, like the Baptist, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Therefore he must be baptized.

This act which he purposed, this humiliation which he was about to impose on himself, taking his place in all simplicity and love of sinners in the ranks of those who confess their faults, was to receive at once a magnificent reward. At the precise moment when he was coming up out of the water his Messianic dignity was revealed to him. In fact, his baptism marks the awakening of his Messianic consciousness. What he had already foreboded was now affirmed. The question which for some time he had been asking himself, "Might it be I?" received its answer. The inward crisis through which he was passing came

to its acme and reached its end. He heard the voice of God saying to him clearly, "Thou art my well beloved son." The voice resounded to the depths of his soul. Jesus heard God. We cannot for an instant doubt it; for from this sacred hour his conviction was not to be shaken. It was an absolute certainty; nothing could thenceforth weaken it.

He had come to the point where he could say, "I am the Messiah," because, feeling himself the child of the Father, he experienced an irresistible desire to realize among men this divine sonship. The development of his moral consciousness had brought him to this definite conviction, to a certitude which to him bore the marks of absolute evidence.

But what kind of Messiah was he to be? What work was he to accomplish? This question he put to himself, and went on to seek for its answer. More and more convinced that in listening to the Baptist and carrying on a work like his he would be in the right way, he immediately began to imitate John. After receiving baptism, he in his turn conferred it. The few disciples whom he had brought from

Nazareth, and who also had been baptized, did the same thing, and the banks of the Jordan were covered with baptizers.[1]

It was not long before a new light shone into the soul of Jesus. Asking himself what kind of Messiah he should be, and what his work, he began to understand, though not yet able to answer his own question, that John's preaching no longer sufficed for him, and that he must carry John's work farther. He perceived that, with all his greatness, John was still the man of the past, and of a past which he could not break with. The Baptist's inferiority became apparent to him. He was compelled to leave him behind; certainly John could never go to the end of the way. In his predictions of the work and office of the coming Messiah there were features which Jesus could not accept. John could not and would not break with the traditional notion of the Messiah. He looked for a king of glory; he was always talking of a Judgment, of vengeance, and a reign of iron.

But the idea of a Messiah reigning by force inspired in Jesus an invincible repug-

[1] John iii. 22–26; iv. 1, 2.

nance. He must work this out; he must ask his Father, he must spend forty days in the desert; and though he did not yet know what would be the outcome of this struggle, he well knew one thing, — that he should not issue from it the Messiah whom John persisted in preaching.

No longer feeling himself in accord with John, his first care was to baptize no longer. Nevertheless he permitted his disciples to baptize,[1] — a slight indication which well reveals the hesitations of his soul.

But he must put an end to these hesitations; he must examine John's ideas concerning the Messiah, and he must ask himself seriously what sort of Messiah he himself ought to be. He must enter upon a conflict and achieve a victory which the Baptist could neither enter upon nor achieve.

It is of the agonizing and terrible conflict which preceded the victory that we have now to speak. Jesus, having given up baptizing, and knowing that he was the Messiah, felt that the question of questions was being put to him with ever-growing

[1] John iv. 1, 2.

urgency, "What kind of Messiah shall I be?" And so he retired to the desert, and the temptation began.

The day would come when Jesus would pronounce the final opinion concerning John: "Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of woman there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist: nevertheless, he that is but little in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."[1] That is to say: I admire him still; I subtract nothing from my early admiration of him; I deny nothing of our long association and our close intimacy. John is Elias; he is my forerunner. Among the sons of the men of the past there has not been born one greater than he. He is more than a prophet. But he would not see in me the Messiah whom he himself announced. He is lower than the least of my disciples. He is not of the kingdom of God, for he has found in me an occasion for scandal.

Jesus then parted from John, but he never forgot him. The vision of the desert where he had gone to see and hear this man was never effaced from his memory.

[1] Matt. xi. 11.

A few days before his death he was still speaking to the Pharisees of John's baptism, and his preaching made such an impression upon him that to the very close of his life bits of phrases and some of the favorite expressions of the Baptist appeared here and there in his own discourses.[1]

He was therefore always grateful to him; but while he felt the greatness of John the Baptist, he also felt most vividly all in which he was wanting.

John the Baptist belonged entirely to a past which must inevitably disappear. He had preached only a moral reformation, based upon the ancient theocracy of Israel, and he always clung too closely to ritual. Jesus, on his part, had discerned the eternal element in the Baptist's preaching and work, and when he applied to him his ordinary method he perceived that John was sewing new cloth upon old garments, putting new wine into old and worn-out wine-skins, which were ready to burst.[2]

[1] Matt. xii. 34; xxiii. 33; etc.

[2] Some persons will no doubt think that there is more than this to say about the Baptist; they will cite to me, for example, that utterance of his, reported in the fourth Gospel, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world." I reply to these

John the Baptist, on his side, kept his disciples, and they remained independent of the Christian movement.[1]

persons in advance that my intention has not been to write a complete monograph on the Forerunner, and that I had no occasion to say what John the Baptist may have thought of Jesus at one or another moment of his life. I had simply to ask what Jesus thought of John the Baptist.

[1] Matt. ix. 14; Mark ii. 18; Luke v. 33, xi. 1; John iii. 25; Matt. xiv. 12; Acts xviii. 24 ff., xix. 2 ff.

IX

THE MESSIANIC IDEAL OF JESUS AT THIRTY YEARS OF AGE

CHAPTER IX

THE MESSIANIC IDEAL OF JESUS AT THIRTY YEARS OF AGE

IMMEDIATELY after the revelation of the baptism the temptation began. He was the Messiah! But others had believed themselves to be the Messiah and had been mistaken! The great "Hope of Israel" had thrown many of his contemporaries into frenzy. Was he to be one of these? Was he in his turn to be the subject of a tremendous illusion? And if he was not mad, was he not to become so?

The minds of his compatriots were becoming excited, their imaginations inflamed; the great word "Messiah" had led astray more than one ill-balanced mind. Some had dared to appropriate it to themselves, and they had ended in insanity. And now he in his turn had received the dreadful heritage. He was to follow in

the same way! The temptation, the danger, were supreme.

He would avoid the danger, and triumph over the temptation. But for this he must undergo a great conflict. It was to be an inward battle, from which he was to come off conqueror. The Gospel stories[1] have brought down to us its sublime and magnificent echo.

For indeed the temptation was not an isolated and momentary experience. It extended over all that part of Jesus' life which immediately followed his baptism. The Evangelists assign to it a duration of forty days. The number is symbolical, like the whole narrative. During forty days, and no doubt a much longer time, Jesus had been asking himself what kind of Messiah he should be. The picturesque narrative of the Evangelists admirably describes the conflict through which his soul was passing, and the struggles which he underwent.

For some time past he had been gradually assuming an attitude of growing reserve with respect of the "Hope of Israel." Before his baptism, during the years of

[1] Matt. iv. 1 ff.; Luke iv. 1 ff.

solitude spent at Nazareth, the thought had presented itself to him: What if I were the Messiah! It had pursued him; he had sought to avoid it, and he had waited with a prudence that cannot be too much admired, — waited because he distrusted himself. Now he knew he was the Messiah, and he could no longer escape the struggle. It came. It was terrible; it was a gigantic battle, out of which he came forth conqueror. His conscience was its battlefield; his triumph in it such that the temptation never again assailed him.

Over what did he triumph? Over false ideas, over the erroneous notions of his contemporaries, over all that he had believed and expected in common with his entire people.

At this point we must be precise, and state what was the "Messianic Idea" which the Jewish Apocalypses had taught him as the truth itself, — what was this wild hope, this dazzling dream, whose vision had been haunting his nation for so many years. Next we must ask what he did with it during those days of conflict in the desert; and we shall see that, faithful to his constant method, he had rejected one part of

it and preserved another. Here again he abolished nothing, he fulfilled everything.

What, then, had he up to this time believed, in common with all his fellow-countrymen, and what was taking place in his soul at the precise moment when he had just learned that he was the Messiah?

He had believed that the Jews were a privileged people, whose privilege it was to have God himself for king.[1] Every day he recited these words of the *Shemone Esre:* "Be King over us, Thou alone, O Lord!"[2] Like all the pious men of his time, he had certainly often said that God was the only King of Israel.[3] The Jewish people were therefore the kingdom of God; but they had fallen into the power of the Gentiles, "sinners," "the wicked," and the kingdom of God was not what it was intended to be. When the Romans were driven out, the true kingdom of God would be established.

It was an ideal for the future. God, the King, had for a time given over his rights to the Gentiles, but the time was at hand

[1] Psalter of Solomon, xvii. 1, 51.
[2] Eleventh Benediction.
[3] See Josephus, *Ant.* xviii. 1, 6, and *Wars*, ii. 8, 1.

when this state of things would cease. Daniel had affirmed it in his prophecies; therefore his book was pondered more than any other, and we have already said that during long years it had certainly been the object of Jesus' constant study. The future kingdom would be universal,[1] Daniel had said; and Jesus believed what this book taught. Again, Daniel said that the Gentile kingdoms should disappear, and the sovereignty should be exercised by pious and believing Jews, who would have at their head a mysterious personage come down from the skies, to be the head of the new Israel, ruler of the world. All peoples of the earth would be subject to the Jews.[2] This idea of Daniel had so thoroughly penetrated the minds of the Jews of the first century that, as we have shown, all the Apocryphas and Pseudepigraphs which Jesus read,[3] in all probability clearly taught it.[4]

[1] Dan. vii. 14. [2] Dan. vii. 13–28.

[3] At least those which were composed before his day; but the date of some of them is still undetermined, and these may be posterior to Christ. In every case (and this is the essential thing) they express ideas which were popular in the time of Jesus.

[4] 1 Macc. ii. 57, iv. 46, xiv. 41; 2 Macc. vii. 9, xiii.

The advent of this kingdom would inaugurate the coming age, and would manifest itself by a Judgment which would precede its establishment. John the Baptist had come, and had preached this with the ardor and conviction of a Seer. He was not mistaken. For he had said, First the Judgment; and this Judgment was imminent.[1] It would be marked by the defeat of the Gentiles and the supremacy of the Jews. Not only did Jesus believe that John the Baptist was not mistaken; he was persuaded that he was the Elias who was to have come, and that he himself, Jesus, was the Messiah. He thought, then, that the history of his people and of the world was just at the moment when the travail pangs of the Messianic epoch were to begin, since Elias was already there, and the Messiah was already born. He must, in fact, be born before the Messianic Judgment, and not after it.[2]

4; Judith ix. 12; Eccl. v. 26, xlvii. 13; Baruch iv. 23, v. 2–4, xxv. 49; Wisdom iii. 8, v. 16; the oldest fragment of the Book of Enoch xc. 29–42, xci. 12, 17; Similitudes xxxix. 1–8, 5–51.

[1] Matt. iii. 10-12; Luke iii. 7-9; see also Luke xix. 11.

[2] Syb. Orac. iii. 652–656; Psal. Sol. xvii. 24, 26, 27, 31, 38, 39, 41, etc.

Now, what was about to take place? A last assault of the Gentiles against the Messiah. But they would not be victorious; that was impossible. On the contrary, they would be all but blotted out by a terrible Judgment; the survivors would be converted and the dispersed Jews brought back again. Thus were all the acts of the great drama fixed in a rigorous order.

When all the scenes which have just been described should have been carried out, then, and then alone, would the kingdom of God be founded. Its seat would be Palestine, and from there it would extend itself over the whole world. The earth would be entirely subject to the children of Israel. An era of supreme felicity would begin: the ground would be of surprising fertility; men would be rich and happy, and would live a thousand years; women would bring forth children without pain; the harvesters would no longer suffer weariness; there would be no injustice committed among the elect people; all men would be holy, and their life a perpetual worship. It would be the Palingenesis, the Renewal of all things.

As to the exact epoch when the Palingenesis was to begin, all were not in accord. Some made it coincide, as we have just said, with the Messianic Kingdom; others placed it later, in what they called *Aolam-aba*, the age to come. Traces of this divergence are to be found in the New Testament. Sometimes it is said that the Kingdom shall be founded in the present age, in the actual world;[1] at others it is placed in the age to come.[2] In any case, one of the characteristics of the Palingenesis would be the Resurrection of the dead, accompanied by a final, universal judgment, the result of which would be, for some, condemnation and torment in Gehenna; for others, life eternal and rewards in the kingdom of God.

This teaching Jesus had received; he was now called to judge of it. It was necessary that he should divide between the true and the false, and take, as Messiah, a definitive attitude with respect to these Messianic beliefs which every one accepted as indisputable verities.

He also would proclaim the kingdom of

[1] Luke xix. 11; xxiv. 21.
[2] Matt. xxiv. 3; Mark xiii. 4.

of God, and he would call it the kingdom of heaven (Malekat hash-shamayim). In this he would simply imitate his contemporaries, with whom the two expressions were absolutely synonymous, and who used the second simply to avoid pronouncing the sacred name of Jehovah, or even the names Elohim and Adonai.[1] Jesus would do the same. He would also consider the kingdom as to come. He would say, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." In the Sermon on the Mount, from which we must date the precepts of the first part of his ministry, all the rewards promised to those who are worthy of the kingdom are reserved for them in the future. "You shall be filled; you shall laugh; they shall see God," etc. He would teach his disciples to say "Thy kingdom come."[3] The kingdom of heaven was therefore not yet come.

[1] We say the same in French, — "Heaven keep me from it!" "Would to Heaven that," for "God keep me from it!" "Would to God that"; and the word "heaven" in the expression "kingdom of heaven" never signified the abode of the blessed after this life. Let us add that this expression, "kingdom of heaven," was very happily chosen, since "the Father is in heaven," and his kingdom to come must come down to be established on earth by the Messiah.

[2] Matt. v. 4 ff.; Luke vi. 21 ff.

[3] Matt. vi. 10; Luke xi. 2.

We have not here to ask if at a later day, in the midst of his ministry, Jesus did not announce the kingdom as present.[1] At the time which we are considering, the time of the Temptation, all the evidence shows that in the mind of Jesus the kingdom was still to come. Nothing indicates that he did not connect this kingdom to come with a second coming of his own, a glorious coming, by which he should establish the kingdom of God on the earth.

Up to this time Jesus had, at least to all appearance, rejected nothing of what his contemporaries taught. What, then, was the temptation? What was the victory achieved by him in the terrible conflict in which he triumphed?

The Gospels expressly distinguish three conflicts and three victories. In the first Satan counselled Jesus to make stones into bread; that is to say, to live for himself, make things subservient to him, seek his own glory. The temptation was formidable because it accords with what the Jewish Messiah was expected to be; he was to be a Master and a King: to come to his throne through blood, if necessary, and,

[1] Matt. xii. 28; Luke xi. 20.

in any case, to seat himself upon a veritable throne. Jesus repelled such a thought. He declared that he would not seek to be served, but, on the contrary, he would serve. Here he had a clear notion of true greatness, and he, first of all, gave it to the world. This truth, to-day so elementary, that the great man is not he who is served but he who renders service, was first affirmed by Jesus in his words and in his life. "Whosoever would become great among you let him be your servant."[1]

By triumphing over this temptation Jesus conquered a place which he will always keep, and which a multitude of his precepts attest. He opposed to the popular ideal another ideal, — that of renunciation and sacrifice, that of obedience to the Father, whatever might be his will.

But now comes the second temptation. Satan said to him, "Throw thyself from a pinnacle of the Temple," — that is to say, dazzle the world, fascinate it by your genius, overawe it by your power; for the Jewish Messiah was expected to dominate and awe. Now, Jesus had read and reread Apocalypses full of transparent alle-

[1] Matt. xx. 26 f., and parallel passages.

gories and obvious imagery whence it was to be drawn that the expected Liberator was, in fact, to use constraint and even violence, and put his enemies beneath his feet. Ah! this temptation much allured him: to dazzle by prodigies, to command belief by sensible or intellectual evidence, to be the undisputed master of the humble, for whom he feels himself full of such an infinite compassion, and thus to serve them!

He repelled it; he would have no other weapon than words, no other prestige than persuasion, no other talisman than love. He would reign only over hearts. The kingdom of God should be spiritual, invisible, purely moral. It should be wherever repentance and a new birth of the soul were found. There should be no sudden and startling appearance, as the Jews would have it, but the slow and blessed action of the mere word of the Messiah; for it was not exterior reforms that would save the world. It was first of all necessary that hearts should be changed; after that exterior reforms would come of themselves as a natural consequence. The Messiah would work no magical transformation.

Here, for the second time, Jesus put himself in absolute opposition to the ideas of his time, and, far from permitting himself to be led away by the Messianic beliefs of his people, he resisted them. It should be the meek, the gentle, who should inherit the earth; and at the time when he proclaimed with greatest energy his kingdom and his Messianic dignity, he made no allusion, not the slightest, to the allegories with which the Apocalypses of his people were filled.[1] He did not even make use of allegorical language; his speech was always simple, unpretentious, popular.

This was not all: he had a third victory to achieve. In a dazzling vision Satan showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, for his people were expecting a political power. And then Jesus asked himself if it ought not to be thus with his kingdom; for he loved his people, and ardently desired that they might be delivered from the Romans. Should he then mingle politics and religion? Never. He would separate them. He absolutely repudiated all political preten-

[1] Save the evident allusions to the allegories of Daniel. Mark xiii. and parallel passages.

sions. He would not have a terrestrial kingdom; to think of it was a suggestion of Satan. He would accept one sole kingdom, — the divine kingdom of the love which would go whithersoever his Father might judge good. Might it be even to martyrdom? He knew not. Did he see a cross uprising at the end of the pathway of life? Not yet. But if such should be the will of the Father, he was ready; and when the day should come he should perceive the accursed tree, he would more than ever insist that he was the Messiah. At the present hour he as yet knew nothing of this; on the contrary, he firmly hoped to deliver his people by some other means.

Jesus, then, was about to offer himself as the Messiah promised by the prophets. The latter had announced that a divine messenger would come to establish the reign of Jehovah at Jerusalem and upon the earth. He was this divine messenger; he was the Son of the Father who is in heaven, and he would realize his kingdom by asking for faith in himself. If the Jews rejected him, if they wrought his destruction, he would carry, even to the cross,

his unshaken trust in his Father and in his work. Even in the face of death he would still be convinced that he should one day return in the clouds to judge the living and the dead. His work would be the sublime coronation of prophecy; he would realize the national hopes, he would be the hero of those Jewish Apocalypses whose reading had nourished his youth.

It was thus without enthusiasm or excitement, but after long deliberation, with ripe reflection, that he took upon himself to carry out the Messianic work, for he had transformed it.

The temptation was ended, and he had decided to undertake the conversion of his people. But though he was ready even for death itself, in thus undertaking it he knew not that his mission would one day require this of him. He was simply the spiritual and moral Messiah; he was not yet the suffering and crucified Messiah. He would serve; his kingdom should be established in men's hearts; he would accomplish only a religious work. On these three points he had achieved a victory. He came forth unscathed from this triple conflict; and

his triumph put him in possession of a new grandeur, a sublime strength, which nothing could abate. The Jewish Messianic idea vanished, swallowed up in his threefold victory.

Yet let us not misconstrue Jesus' true thought. If his kingdom was purely spiritual, if he separated politics from religion, it was not that Jesus had not a profound sympathy with the national hope of his people. He cherished the hope that the nation would understand that the kingdom was solely religious, and yet that it could be at the same time the national kingdom predicted by the prophets, and which they all expected. He hoped to found in the heart of his nation, by pacific means, by persuasion and love, a kingdom whose head — himself — would be acclaimed by the Pharisees. No doubt he had no notion how the Romans could be done away with without the employment of force; perhaps, like his contemporaries, he counted upon a miraculous intervention of the Heavenly Father. But it is evident that he chose twelve apostles because he looked forward to the national restoration of the twelve tribes, and in consequence

the foundation of a kingdom on earth,—in this sense a visible kingdom. He afterward said to Peter, "now in this time;"[1] promising him a brilliant and public reward in the present time as well as in the age to come.

I will go farther, and say that this hope did not leave him even when his death was certain. He did not oppose the request of the sons of Zebedee,[2] nor did he deny that he should one day be enthroned in glory, with his apostles beside him. His martyrdom was no doubt to precede this glorification; but there would be seats on his right hand and on his left, and his Father would bestow them. When in Gethsemane he said, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me,"[3] this prayer had no meaning if it did not signify that he hoped against all hope that his kingdom would be founded without the cross: incomparably more must he have hoped this in the days of his temptation, saying to himself, My people may recognize and welcome me. And he said this to himself until the end,

[1] Luke xviii. 30; Matt. xix. 27–29.
[2] Matt. xx. 20 ff., and parallel passages.
[3] Matt. xxvi. 39, and parallel passages.

always believing in a possible change of feeling.

Jesus, then, always thought that he might be recognized as the national Messiah and religious Liberator. To the last day he tried hard to gain the Jews, and cherished the deathless hope that his people would escape the catastrophe of the year 70 by submitting themselves to him.

Therefore he gave himself entirely to this work, in which he displayed an indefatigable activity. He was not yet saying, "The Son of man has come to give his life," for he believed that he had come to found his kingdom in his lifetime, to found it by his merciful and holy activity. But he did say, "The time is fulfilled." [1] The kingdom was imminent; it was even already present in the person of its head.

From the beginning he himself had the first place in the kingdom, for he was "he who should come;" but he did not yet preach himself; he preached only "the Gospel of the kingdom," and in no particular broke with the Pharisees. The rupture with them — that is, with Judaism, for we must remember that the Pharisees

[1] Mark i. 15.

were the true Judaism — was not to come until later. For the moment he magnified Judaism, he fulfilled it by remaining in the great current of the best Pharisaic ideas; that is, by preaching a large spiritualization of the kingdom of God, as is shown by the Beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount,[1] by the sermon at Nazareth in which he cites Isaiah,[2] by the parable of the Sower,[3] by his reply to the emissaries of John the Baptist,[4] in a word, by the entire first part of his ministry. But if he did not as yet preach his own person, he was none the less convinced, from the time of his baptism, that he bore in his person the realization of the "Hope of Israel."

Since he was the Messiah, he must one day return to judge the world; and during his entire public life he affirmed the Judgment to come with the same vigor, the same unalterable conviction. He closed the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount, in the first part of his ministry, by declaring that in the last day he would say to those who had not done the will of the Father, "Depart from me, I never knew

[1] Matt. v. 3 ff.
[2] Luke iv. 16 ff.
[3] Matt. xiii. 4 ff.
[4] Matt. xi. 2 ff.

you;"[1] and in one of his last parables, when he was about to die, when his cross and its ignominy were distinctly before him, he declared, with the same certitude, that he should one day preside at the solemn assizes in which all humanity would be judged.[2] Returning in his glory in the clouds of heaven, he would sit upon a throne, and put some on his right hand, others on his left. It is impossible to minimize the immense force of this testimony which Jesus gave to himself.

He insisted upon his Messianic authority all his life. His confidence in himself, the conviction with which he spoke of himself and asserted himself, never weakened. Quite the contrary, he was never more positive than in the hour when the cross confronted him, — that is to say, the hour when overwhelming defeat appeared to himself to be inevitable.

Later, men would explain this: councils would bring new elements to the doctrine of Jesus concerning himself. It is for theologians to ask whether these new elements which the Church has contributed are simply a logical, inevitable, necessary de-

[1] Matt. vii. 23. [2] Matt. xxv. 31 ff.

duction from what Jesus has said of his person, or whether, on the contrary, they are only a deplorable deviation from it. There was to grow up a doctrine of the Trinity, of three Gods who are each God and yet constitute only one God. This defiance to good sense was to be still more accentuated. It would come to be taught that one substance could be transformed into another without losing the properties which reveal it to our senses; finally, a Christian Pantheon would come to be created, and a secondary order of worship, in which saints, angels, virgins, and martyrs would take in popular devotion the place of God himself, and of his Son.

X

THE ORIGINALITY OF JESUS

CHAPTER X

THE ORIGINALITY OF JESUS

WE have endeavored to show in Jesus, as a man of his time, a Jew growing up in the midst of the religious beliefs of his contemporaries, studying them, assimilating or rejecting them, always independent of them, and yet obliged to reckon with them. But not one of the great personalities of history may be entirely explained in this way, and Jesus less than any other. If he was not an exception to the general law which ordains that every man shall be determined by his race, his environment, and the age in which he is born, no more was he an exception to that other mysterious and hidden law, according to which there is in every great individuality a deep, hidden force which remains beyond the pale of all appreciation. If a Shakespeare, a Luther, a Napoleon have their own originality, and are not to be entirely explained by heredity, environ-

ment, and the time in which they lived, much less is Jesus.

In what consists the originality of Jesus? What is its very essence? To this question we think the impartial historian must unhesitatingly answer: The very clear and full consciousness of a union with God, which nothing in the past had ever troubled, and which nothing troubled in the present. The Old Testament taught him about God; nature disclosed him to him, and he saw him in the Old Testament as in nature. But this exterior vision was as nothing compared with the permanent inward vision which illuminated his soul. Between God and him there was a constant and mysterious interchange; God was his Father, he was his Son, and this communion was alive, and was never disturbed. At a later day theologians might speak of two natures. Let us leave the theologians to themselves. The reality of history speaks to us in nobler language than theirs; and if we remain upon the territory of facts, we see in Jesus the supreme revelation of God upon earth. The longings of ancient humanity were realized in him; its religious pilgrimage

was ended; it had tried all the religions of Paganism, and now he had appeared in whom it could rest. There is nothing beyond the religious consciousness of Jesus, and man can conceive of nothing.

Without doubt there have been visionaries, mystics, *illuminati*, who also have possessed God, lived in him, lost themselves in him; but their own personality disappeared, while with Jesus the consciousness of God was never apart from his consciousness of himself. The more he felt God in and with him, the more evident became his own personality, the stronger his assurance that he was himself man, such as man should be, the true man, the Son of God. The more he possessed God the more he possessed himself; and it was because the consciousness which he had of his own value was never separated from his consciousness of God that he could say, "Come unto me," "Believe in me." It was thus that he attained to faith in his divine mission, and to the conviction that he was in the world for its salvation. His faith in his Messianic vocation and his faith in his own perfect holiness were nothing else than a consciousness of his

union with God, or faith in his own Divinity.

Let us try to be exact. If Jesus had these convictions, there are only two possible suppositions, — those which we pointed out in our Introduction. According to the first, he was the victim of a strange and prodigious delusion when he believed himself to be in constant relations with God, in delusion when he had faith in himself, in delusion when he permitted himself to be acclaimed as Messiah; and he died the victim of this mad mistake. It is thus, we have said, that Renan understood Jesus. His exquisite charm, having first seduced the multitudes, ended by seducing himself, and, intoxicated with success, he ended at last in madness.

The other alternative alone seems to us possible; and that in the name of facts impartially observed, for we would here give simply a historical verification. We believe that it was the inward development of his moral consciousness which led Jesus to declare himself the Saviour of the world. His vocation did not come to him from without; it was not events which made Jesus the Son of God, for the events can

only be explained by the consciousness which Jesus had of being the Son of God.

Not long ago we wrote the words "perfect holiness of Jesus." It is impossible to prove directly his perfect holiness, for documents are wanting, and the life of Jesus is too little known. But it can be proved that he always had a consciousness of integrity, and that he was never known to repent. It is therefore permitted to affirm that there was nothing culpable in his life, for this may be legitimately inferred from these two facts. This is why we defined as holiness his perfect union with God, his constant and unalterable feeling of the entire approval of Him whom he called the Father; in a word, the consciousness of a cloudless integrity. The peace of his soul was never disturbed; he regretted nothing, was ashamed of nothing, was guilty of nothing.

But he knew our temptations; he must have conquered them, and his victories were not achieved without suffering. Jesus had a very vivid and profound feeling with regard to sin. The story of the temptation in the desert shows him to us as struggling against evil just such as it pre-

sents itself to us. He had been haunted by the dream of an easy success; he had known what was the intoxication of pride, he had divined the allurements of the flesh. But he had never yielded for so much as an instant; his efforts had always been victorious, and he had never weakened in his incessant conflict. Therefore we never find in him the slightest feeling of moral powerlessness. And yet it is the best among the children of men who always feel themselves the most weak; the most advanced in the right way who believe themselves to have taken only the first steps; those who are nearest to reaching the goal who fear they may never attain it. Such was the experience of men like St. Paul, Pascal, St. Cyran, Adolphe Monod. The ideal appeared to them ever higher and more distant, their will without strength, and their conflict without success.

With Jesus there was nothing of the kind. He was sure of himself, sure of God, sure of his own holiness. His soul bore no scars, for it had never received a wound, never suffered a moral defeat. Strange fact, which manifests itself with an incontestable historic verity, he knew

not what it was to feel himself pardoned and restored. He had never trembled in humiliation at the secret and overwhelming memory of a moral fall. There had never been an interval between his will and his duty, and the plaints of great saints had never rent his soul. The good which he willed, that he did; the law that he gave to himself, that he fulfilled; the ideal which presented itself to him he realized; and yet his ideal of holiness, of uprightness and love, his ideal of moral perfection, is the highest that ever was.

Is it possible to define the character of Jesus? We cannot arrive at such a definition by showing that all good qualities are to be found united in him. If we could show this, we should only have made more impossible the description of his character. For if he had good qualities of the most opposite kinds, and, in consequence, all characters, then he had none at all, — which is impossible. A person without character would be an abstraction with neither interest nor life. Nothing is so tedious as the story of so-called perfect persons, in works of the imagination. But Jesus is

the most interesting, the most captivating personality in history. We always come back to him; the enigma of his person and life is always before us. He therefore had a character, an individuality of clearest, most well-defined outlines.

Nevertheless, it seems to us that though a complete definition of the character of Jesus is impossible, there are yet two characteristics which dominate all others.

The first is this: The faculties of his soul were always alert. His reason was always firm and enlightened; his heart always open to all sympathies, his will always of a heroic energy. The exterior world was never closed to him; he always had his eyes open to all that surrounded him, and at every moment he gave himself without reserve. This is the first feature which strikes us in the character of Jesus.

The second is self-collectedness. He loved retirement and solitude because there he found the Father, who "is in secret;" and we have said that he was the first to put in practice his precept, "When thou prayest, shut thy door."[1] In consequence, we find in him neither the thoughtless

[1] Matt. vi. 6.

enthusiasm which anticipates the hour of duty, nor the cowardice which lets pass the moment for doing it. He was always ready; but he awaited the decisive hour, that which he called "the hour appointed by the Father." There was therefore in him inward harmony, deep coherence, and, at the same time, dramatic progress.

During his ministry he was never guided by external fatalism; everything was with him the product of a free decision. Nothing ever broke down that decision, nothing ever made it flinch. His life was the greatest drama of history, and, at the same time, the most perfect, — a moral drama, whose sole factor, personal and always active, was his heroic will.

These seem to us to have been the two dominant features of Jesus' character. They were complementary to each other, and constituted his personality. We have already made them manifest when defining his holiness. Jesus shows us, on one side, man such as he ought to be, whose moral stature is complete, the man who is a true Son of God; and on the other side a deep and never-troubled union with God, complete harmony between the Father and the Son.

We have endeavored in the preceding pages to separate the figure of Jesus from the theological and dogmatic notions which were formulated by the Church at a later day. The task was difficult, perhaps impossible; in any case, we cannot pursue it farther. Jesus, during his ministry, declared that he was the object of the Christian religion, — that the faith, the love, and the worship of believers ought to be concentrated upon him. Later the Church would say: Jesus said that we must believe on him because he was this or that. We leave on one side these *becauses*, and, faithful to the method which we imposed upon ourselves, we confine ourselves to setting forth the facts, — the historic facts which alone are beyond all dispute. Now, if any fact is certain, it is that Jesus declared that he would reconcile earth with heaven; that he would restore the sinner, console the afflicted, give eternal life. Here is his originality, and it is undeniable; here is also his power. Men may show us, if they will, that all Christian morals were already to be found in Hellenic morality; it is none the less certain that Greek philosophy remained sterile,

and that Christianity has transformed the world.

Without doubt, Jesus Christ was born at a propitious day and hour. We have said that Luther, born a hundred years earlier, would not have been Luther; any precursor of the Reformation who died obscure might, perhaps, have been as great as he, if he had been born in the same time as he. It matters not, for the personality of Jesus towers far above all that he can have owed to his time and his environment. Here is one proof among a thousand, and it also is from facts. The notion of sin is closely connected with the appearance of Jesus. Christ carried war into the hearts of men by awakening there a purely moral sense, — the sense of sin; and to awaken it he laid no stress upon the duality of mind and matter. The most characteristic feature of Christian doctrine, the most profound cause of its action in the world, comes from its notion of holiness. A thirst for purity and perfection appeared upon the earth with Jesus. No doubt he did not create it. The notion of holiness is a Hebraic notion; nevertheless, it is only from the time of Jesus Christ that

men have carried on an interior struggle, have gone down into themselves and discovered in their souls hidden treasures and unknown springs, — an immense fact, inexplicable by the mere preaching of holiness upon the lips of the Christ, and to be explained only by the moral perfection of the person of Jesus. If men like St. Paul, St. Augustine, Luther, Pascal, have not chosen for themselves the defilements and degradations of the world; if they hungered for the ideal, were athirst for holiness; if they smote upon their breasts and implored the pardon of God with tears, — it was because Jesus had shown them what is the perfection which God requires. If, finally, Jesus brought about the most formidable crisis in human history, it is because he was perfectly holy. The Jewish conscience has become the conscience of humanity itself. All its promises, all its hopes, all its aspirations were realized in Jesus. He was the normal man, man such as he was intended to be. There was no weakness in his life, and none will ever be discovered there. The tradition of sin was vanquished, and it is he who conquered it.

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

JESUS is ready, and about to begin his ministry. He is about thirty years old;[1] he is definitively leaving Nazareth, deciding to establish himself in Capernaum, a large city on the border of the Lake of Tiberias. He will dwell in a house which will become his own. From it he will travel about in Galilee, and will gather around him numerous disciples. His first preaching will be the pure and simple repetition of the call of John the Baptist: "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand."[2]

Let us try to picture him to ourselves as he was then. His dress is composed of two garments, the tunic and the mantle. His tunic is of linen, fitted to the body, with sleeves, and reaching to the feet; his

[1] Luke iii. 23. [2] Matt. iii. 2.

mantle is white, striped with brown or dark blue;[1] it is wide and floating when he walks, but he often binds it close to his waist with a girdle. His feet are shod with leather sandals, fastened with thongs, and made of the skin of the camel or hyena. He has a staff in his hand, and on his head a turban, without which he is never seen. He removes it only at night, and puts it on every morning; he wears it in the house and in the synagogues; he prays with covered head. Fastened under the chin by a cord, it falls down on either side over his shoulders and his tunic.

With regard to the exterior aspect of Jesus, his face, we have no information. We should be glad if the traditional picture were historic; it would be difficult to picture Jesus to ourselves under any other form. Nevertheless, this traditional type is purely conventional. The writings of those who knew Jesus, the writings of the apostles, never give any information as to his exterior aspect. The most ancient Fathers who speak of him — Jus-

[1] These were the usual colors; but it is possible that Jesus had adopted the white garment of the Essenes.

tin Martyr, Tertullian, Origen — all affirm that he was small of stature and plain of face. Let us hasten to add that this assertion rests on nothing historical, but is an *a priori* conclusion, drawn from Isaiah's description of the servant of Jehovah:[1] "There is no beauty in him that we should desire him," "He has no form nor comeliness," etc. These passages, it was said, are prophetic: they must therefore tell us exactly how Jesus looked.

The Gnostic heretics of the second century, whose witness is as ancient as that of the Fathers whom we have just named, sketched the face of Jesus, and asserted that in these pictures they reproduced a portrait made by Pilate himself. According to them, Pilate was so much struck with the face of Jesus at the time of his judgment, that even while proceeding with his interrogatory he at once sketched his picture. This entirely fabulous assertion is reported by Irenæus and Hippolytus. One of the pictures representing the pretended sketch by Pilate was placed by Alexander Severus in his Oratory, beside the portraits of Abraham and Apollo.

[1] Isa. lii., liii.

Eusebius, in the fourth century, says that there are in Palestine several portraits of Jesus Christ, and even his statue; but we do not know under what form he was there portrayed. However, at this epoch they began to represent Jesus as the perfect type of physical beauty. This assertion rests no more than the other upon historic data, but, like that, takes its origin from a passage in the Old Testament. According to this passage, there applied to Jesus Christ, he must have been "the fairest among the sons of men." [1]

About this time we find legends appearing. According to them, Luke was a painter, and made a portrait of Jesus. King Abgar of Edessa possessed this portrait, which Jesus himself had sent him. The veil of St. Veronica had also preserved the imprint of the face of Christ. Finally, an ecclesiastical writer of the eighth century undertook to describe Jesus Christ, but without other guide than his imagination.

In the twelfth century was fabricated a so-called letter of Lentulus to the Roman senate, describing the exterior aspect of

[1] Psalm xlv. 3.

Christ; and in the fourteenth century Nicephorus Calixtus also made a description of Jesus. Finally, was invented the letter which Pilate wrote to Herod when sending Jesus Christ to him.

From that time the type of Christ was fixed, — a young man with abundant curling hair and undivided beard, resembling a young god, full of grace and strength. Some features of this portrait, relatively recent, and invented out of whole cloth, may be authentic. The Jews wore the beard undivided and the hair long; it is therefore exact to say that it was thus with Jesus. But we know nothing more than this; and the simple fact that Judas was obliged to kiss him in order to point him out shows that when he was with the twelve apostles nothing distinguished him from any one of them, — neither his height, nor his garments, nor his face. The moral perfection of his soul certainly appeared in the habitual expression of his features, and shone in his glance; but this fact does not warrant a precise conclusion as to the face of Jesus, since those who knew him not might take him for one of the twelve and not for the Master himself.

Let us return, in closing, to some of the questions which we put in our Introduction; and first, let no one say any more about the charm of Jesus. To explain the enigma offered by his life by saying he was a charmer is notoriously insufficient. That there emanated from his person a very great charm is not to be doubted, provided we give this word a very elevated meaning; but even then it seems to us to be very ill chosen. Doubtless no one dreams of characterizing as charming his precepts which call for self-sacrifice, devotion, and obedience, or of finding a charm in the spectacle of Jesus putting the first of his precepts into practice, and giving the example of submission and renunciation. It would be better worth while to give up the word, and when Christ is in question, never to use it.

We also asked, How did Jesus come to announce himself, and to believe himself to be the Messiah? In the preceding pages we have tried to answer this question in part, and in particular to show that there was no trace of madness in Jesus. On the contrary, that in him which is most striking, the more closely

one studies him, is his possession of himself, his clear-sightedness, his complete freedom from illusion. If he perceived that Jewish theology was taking the wrong way, that the doctrine of a Messiah who should seek his own glory, astonish the world by his miracles, and rule all the nations of the earth, was false, — it was because he never felt in the least degree the influence of the beliefs of his people, and because, far from being led away by the ideas of his time, he struggled against and conquered them.

It appears, then, that Jesus, by himself alone, in the midst of a hostile world, conceived the idea of a universal salvation achieved by a purely spiritual work. And he said to himself, in advance, that though he were met by outbreaks of hatred, though he were not understood, though he succumbed in the struggle, he should be none the less convinced, to the very end, that he had made the right choice, and should die with the approbation of his own conscience and the approval of God.

And now let us pursue our task; and may God give us time and strength to go on with it to the very end. We have to

speak of Jesus during his ministry. After that, in a third volume, we shall describe his trial, his death, his resurrection. Henceforth we shall not need to conjecture, for there are existing sources. We have already borrowed from them at times. What is their value? The answer to this question will be the object of our first study in the following book.